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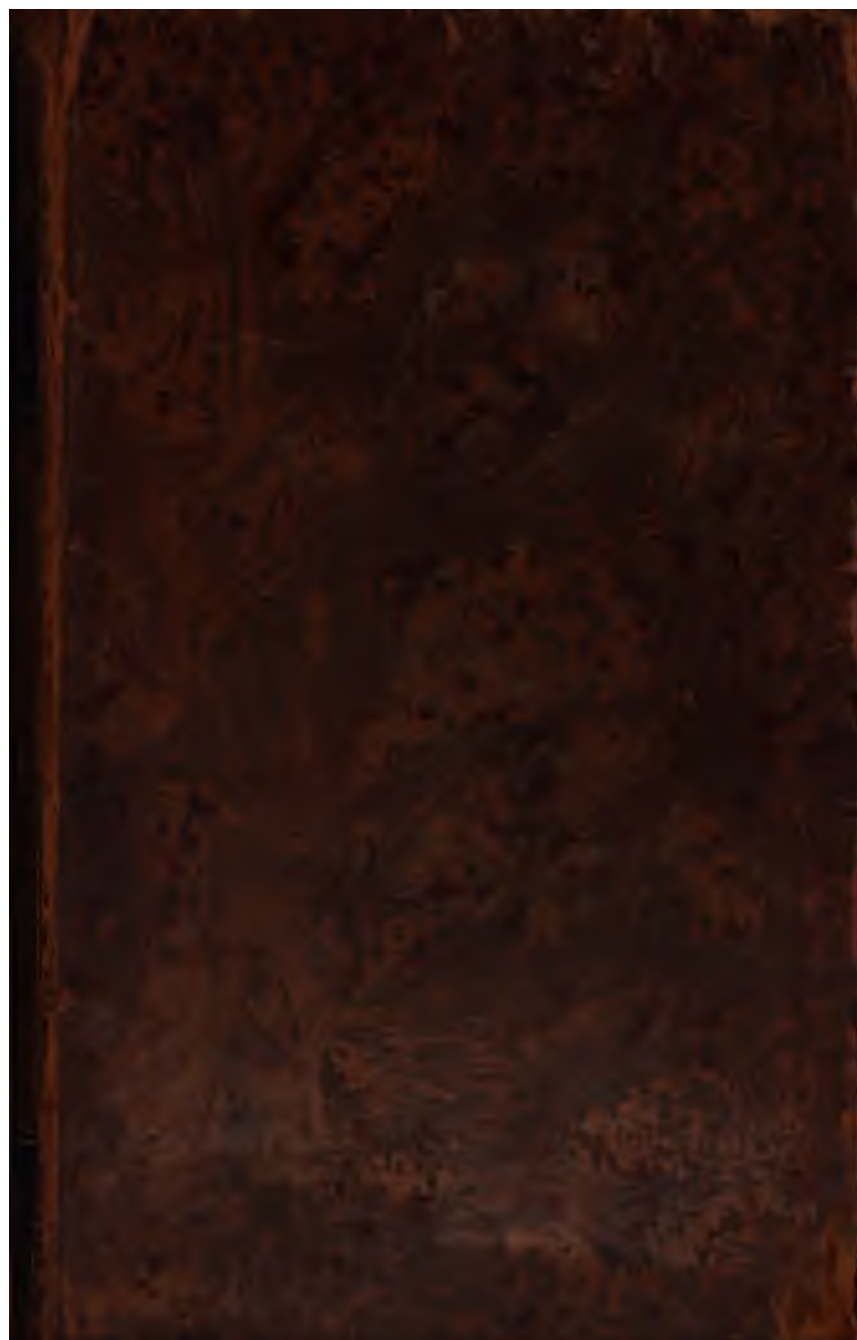
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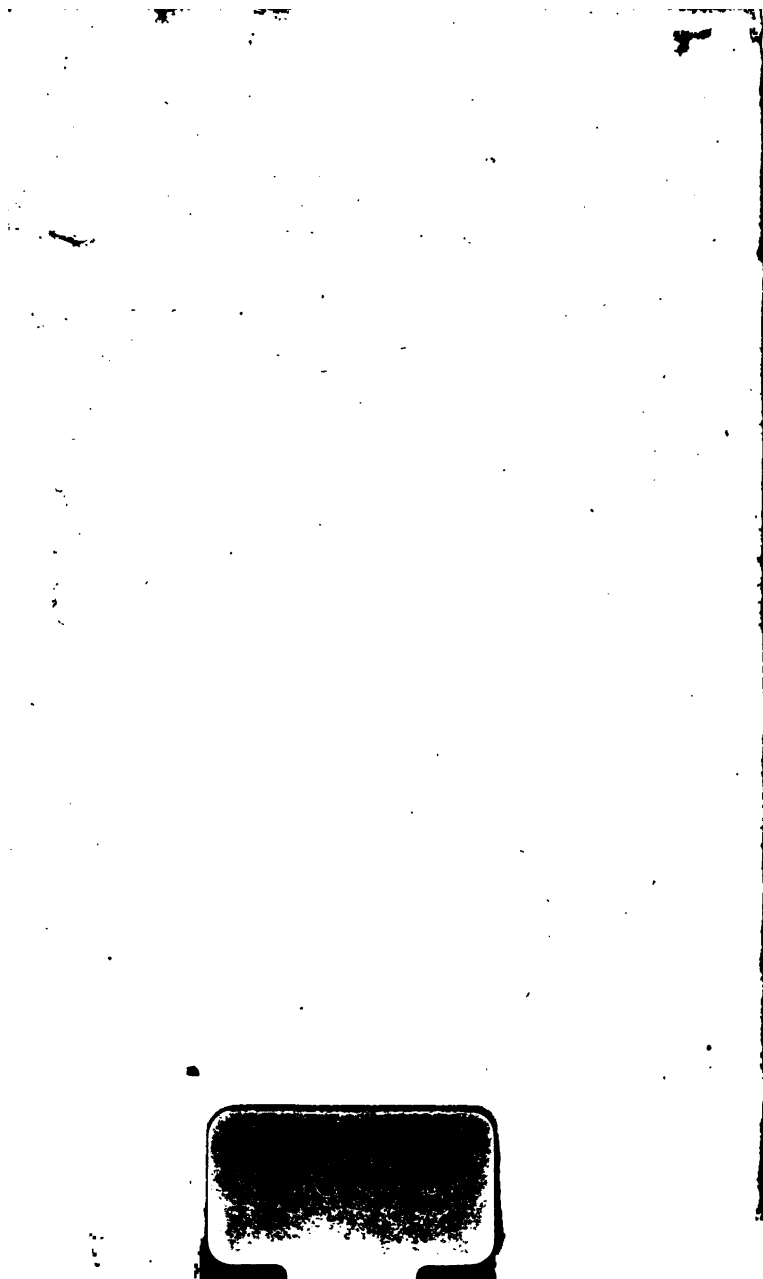
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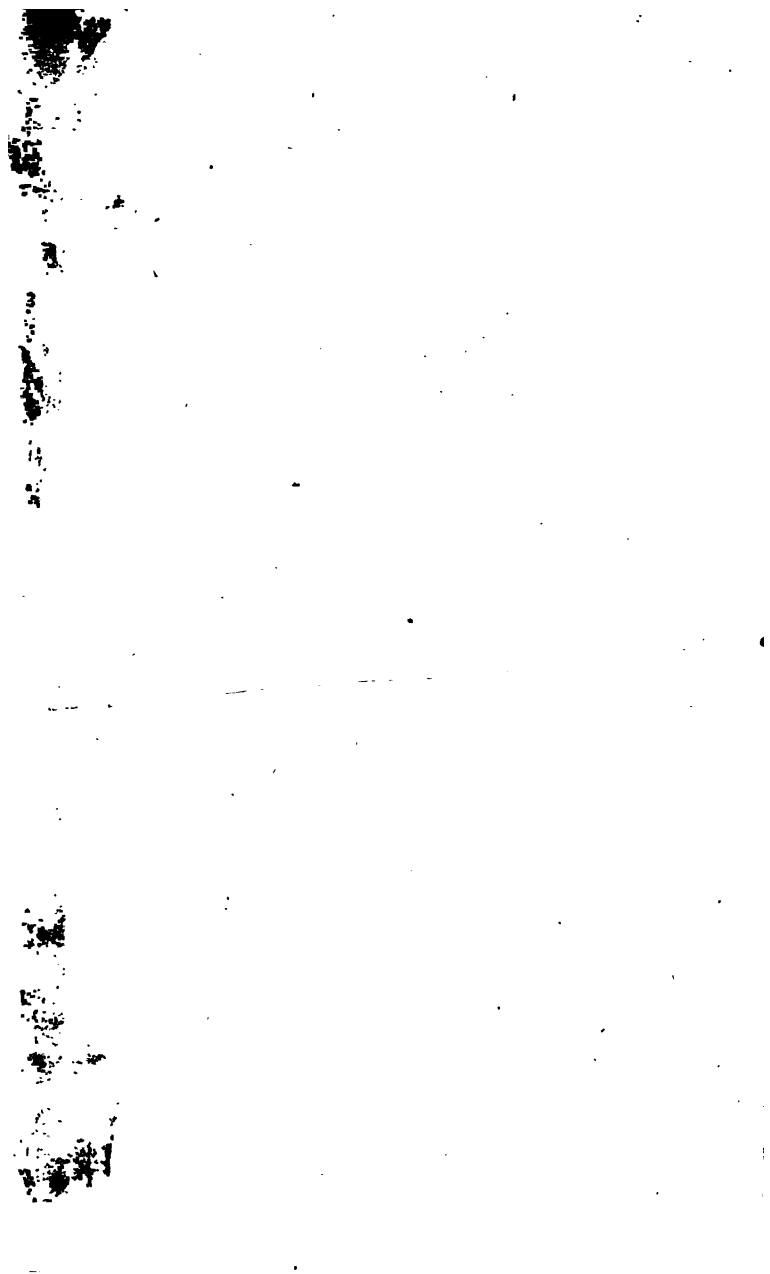
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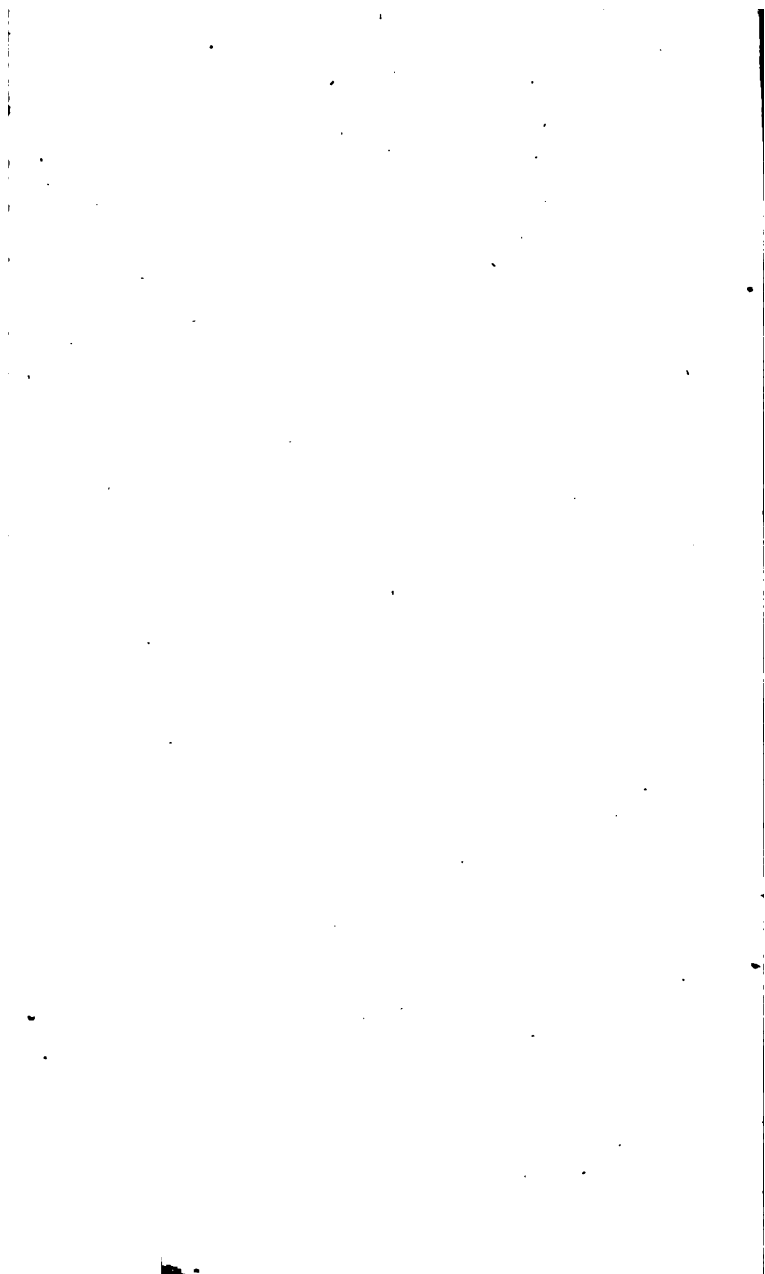
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HENRY SOMERVILLE,

A T A L E.

V O L. II.

HENRY SOMERVILLE,

A T A L E.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

HARTLEBOURN CASTLE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

V O L. II.

— Dans l'avenir pour mon ame embelli
Tout me rioit, tout me flattoit d'avance ;
De mes vieux ans mon fils étoit l'ami,
De ses succès j'étois enorgueilli,
J'élevois sur son nom ma superbe esperance.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR J. BELL, NO. 148, OXFORD-STREET.

1797.

249. S. 126.

HENRY SOMERVILLE.

C H A P. XVI.

BUSY Rumour flapped her wings half over the kingdom before the sun had risen to its next day's noon : not a lip had sipped the morning fragrance of the tea-table, nor rosy health quaffed deep its nut-brown ale, without the story of the preceding evening, without invention with its magnifying glass, and all the train of multiplied wonders freely taking their devious range ; one had

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conquered twenty deaths, and the other died a thousand in his arms ! Astonishment is, of all the other passions of the human breast, the easiest raised ;—in our early inexperienced years, when every thing breaks fresh upon the mind ;—in the middle age, when we wonder because we never saw or heard before ;—and in our declining days, when we create wonders as the boast of our experience, and dwell on the marvellous in order to secure attention !

When Lord Norbury returned on the day following to Sir Francis Bloom, whom he had unfortunately left in the circle of harpies who had deeply impressed the mark of their talons

talons on his heart, the fame of this event had rung through every town and village, and met him as he passed along. When he arrived at the inn where his melancholy friend awaited him, the toast of Henry Somerville and Harriet Howard burst, in reiterated shouts, from every room, and was joined with heartiest merriment that played jocund round the foaming brimmer at the door. His Lordship could scarcely be suffered to alight, or his servants to attend him, before they had satisfied the eager curiosity of every one, to know something of the health of the parties. In short, if Henry Somerville had chosen at that moment to stand for

the county, or almost even to set up a claim to the crown, neither the influence of one party nor the rights of the other could have resisted the torrent of his popularity. But Henry himself with a glorious pride would not exchange

" Those heart-ennobling sorrows, for the lot
Of him who sits amid the gaudy herd
Of mute barbarians bending to his nod!"

Far other fortunes attended the degraded ignominious child of folly, Sir Francis Bloom. His health had fled before he boasted of his empty name; his honour was blighted before he had felt its influence; his virtue, at least its few remaining sparks, shot their feverish frowns upon
his

his heart, while it grew callous to the nobler smiles of nature. Without information to invigorate his mind, without generosity to ennoble his soul, and without the courage engendered by virtue, this honourable Baronet, with a sumptuous fortune at command, with friends inclined to encourage his cheerfulness and honour his circle of acquaintance, and with the most favourable grounds for cementing friendships which might have rendered his days happy and enviable—was the slave of debauchery, the pander of low intrigue, and less than the foot-stool of avaricious extravagance. There was not a day that his profligacy did not

mark him with ruin or disease; not an hour that his contemptible weakness did not plunge him into the barbarous pillage of his worthless companions; not a moment that his folly and misery did not burst upon his torpid imagination the horrors of those flagrant resources by which he sought to drown his unstified care! Alas! the finger of Evil had marked him for her own! She sat a heavy night-mare upon his slumbers! And the croaking murmurs of the hoarse and hungry vulture broke upon his ear, while they writhed his fluttering heart in never-ending torments of despair!

His fame and his fortunes, his happiness

pinels and his hopes of comfort, had all taken their leave ; for discretion and resolution belonged to a family with whom he was a stranger. Thus, whenever folly takes entire possession of the heart,

“ Farewell to virtue’s peaceful times,
 Soon will you stoop to act the crimes
 Which thus you stoop to fear ;
 Guilt follows guilt, and where the train
 Begins with wrongs of such a strain,
 What horrors form the rear ! ”

AKENSIDE.

How many thousands read, and hear
 and see, these instances of misery created
 by themselves, and still like
 madmen pursue their vain career !

Lord Norbury needed not the
 example ; but it was his lot, from

long acquaintance, and the early zeal of friendship never forgotten in riper years, to shew those unrequited services which were denied by every other friend Sir Francis had, or now deserved.

When his Lordship entered the room, he found him leaning his face on his hand, which he tried in vain to hide : his body bending over the table, his linen unchanged, his hair uncombed, his garters hanging unfinished from his open knees, discovered the air of misery and woe more truly than ever poet's fancy dreamed. As he raised his head, his countenance wore a pale and livid hue ; his eyes sunk and dead, and his
lips

lips parched. As Lord Norbury approached him and was drawing a chair to his side, he was interrupted by some hasty footsteps on the staircase, followed by the entrance of a large ill-looking man, with an oaken club in his hand, about seven feet high and half as many broad, whose looks painted him to be one of those assiduous administrators of justice who live upon the miseries of mankind!

"I won't stay no longer, by Good! Come, Sir Francis, the chaise waits at the door, and I have got six other warrants to do when I get to London, and I can't stay no longer!"

"Good Heavens!" cried Lord

B 5 Norbury,

Norbury, "how is all this?" "Why, Sir—my Lord, I ask your Honour's pardon—but I have been here awaiting long enough; and unless you have got nine hundred and twelve pound ten and six-pence, for the debt and costs, to discharge this execution, he must go to town along with me — and there's my proper warrant."

" 'Tis hard, indeed," said his Lordship, "you did not take his goods—"

"Goods!—Goods indeed! Why, for that matter—why, it's a sign you have not been in Brook-street lately! Why, all his goods have been seized long ago; and, what's worse than all that,

that, Will Stopgap told me, as I was standing a night or two ago in the Bailey, that there was a little matter of a rape.”—His Lordship frowned, and started back a few paces.

“ Aye, your Honour may frown at me, but he’ll find it true !” “ Is there any thing else against him, friend ?” asked his Lordship.

“ Why, as to that matter,” answered Jack Blunt, “ perhaps there may, when I come to search the office.”

“ Oh, horror ! horror !” exclaimed Sir Francis :—“ But where is Armstrong ? Perhaps he—” “ No, no,” interrupted Blunt—“ you have got the wrong sow by the ear there !—

Please your Lordship, that's a gull as won't bite."

"What do you mean?" said Lord Norbury; "I don't understand you."

"Oh, don't you? Why, we have had at him already! No, no, he has fairly bilked us! He thought that Sir Francis would apply to him, 'cause how he has won a good slice of his stuff; but as soon as he saw me come in, he smelt a rat, and ordered his horses; and before I could well come and touch my man, 'squire Armstrong was off."

"How came he to know you? Did you tell your business to *him*?" said Lord Norbury.

"Ha? ha?—No, my Lord—Who
does

does that in our profession? Mum's the word with us, my Lord.—Sometimes we smoke a man in a corner, by not letting nobody know who we are after. Why, you would not think now that I have got here in this pocket-book warrants to the amount of some thousands, all to be done afore Term; and if we were to let the cat out of the bag, what would the sheriff say to us? No, no, my Lord!—We could take your own son from your presence, and you not know why nor wherefore.”

“Indeed!”

“Aye, my Lord, indeed: why, I was here last week ’straining on a farmer—it ’most broked my heart, it

did—how his poor wife did cry,
 surely ! and nobody need ha' known
 nothing of it but for her crying—and
 she was but delivered of twins three
 days afore—and there was not enough
 neither, to pay all as we wanted, so
 we left them without any stick nor
 stock ;—and when all came to all, it
 comed out to be the very father of
 the girl as Sir Francis——But I ask
 your pardon, Sir Francis ; perhaps
 nothing may come of it ; there's
 many a way to get off, you know, at
 our Bailey ; so I'd never die dung-
 hill. Now I'll be bold to say, that
 there never was an act of parliament
 made but a good whip could drive
 a coach and six through it. But
 come,

come, Sir Francis, upon my soul
we must be off."

Sir Francis heaved a deep sigh.

Lord Norbury, who was petrified
and oppressed by what he heard,
could scarcely restrain his indigna-
tion, though he hesitated on which
of the two objects before him to let
it vent : it was impossible to offer
any relief in such a case ; and the most
serious evil of all was a crime which
Sir Francis must answer solely for
himself.

Sir Francis raised himself from
his seat, and, pressing his Lordship's
hand—"If this moment," said he,
"should be the last in which we
may ever meet, do not think me un-
mindful

mindful of your undeserved friendship, it will be the only comfort I now have to carry with me to the grave! Would this were the last moment! I have ill deserved your kindness, and have requited them worse! I was in hopes that this interview would have been spared!—If you have a sword, Norbury, plunge it here,” baring his beating bosom—“for I—”

“Be comforted, Sir,” said his Lordship.—“No, never!—comfort I am not entitled to, it has left me for ever; what I feel must soon complete *my* trial; Heaven will shield you with virtue to endure *yours*.”

His Lordship, astonished at this
lan

language, and the haggard eye with which he gazed upon him and then shrunk from him, requested Blunt to allow them a few minutes pause together. "Something oppresses his mind," said his Lordship; "it may save his life to explain it."

"No!" replied Jack, "I never word a man when he's in company; if he has any thing to say, let him say it afore me—he need not be afraid of me, I never tell."

"Give me your orders," said Lord Norbury; "they shall be punctually fulfilled."

"Oh, my Lord!" starting back as he was proceeding, shuddering at the bare utterance of his secret—

"I have

" I have a tale to unfold, which time does not now permit. I have been wholly in the power of Armstrong—he is flushed with some late successes he has gained—he broke in upon me during your absence, and, under promise of concealing the very crime which Blunt has just mentioned, engaged me in a plot, which my information materially served to promote, before he rushed into the accomplishment of it.—But the time runs on!—I dare not name it!—Oh, mercy, Heaven!—I go to certain misery!"—Then breaking abruptly from his Lordship—"Fly, my Lord, with every speed in life, if you would save—Fanny Somerville."

His

His Lordship started with an agony not to be described: he followed Sir Francis to the door of the house, entreating a word more in explanation. "I dare not further," said the wretched culprit. Blunt lifted him into a chaise and four horses, which was out of sight in an instant.

Agitated and astonished beyond example, Lord Norbury felt himself called upon by every obligation of honour, had he not a more sensitive inducement, to rush forward to the field of action with the utmost expedition; and having loaded his servants' pistols and procured another pair

(20)

paid for his own pocket, discharged
the account with his host, and pur-
sued his anxious journey to Mr.
Somerville's house.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

WHEN Henry arrived at home after his adventure at the Park, he withdrew to his silent chamber, still indulging the luxury of reflection, which had rendered the way short and the time momentary. His family, still locked in the arms of gentle slumber, had been perhaps the only one within some miles' circuit who had yet the tale to learn; but before the social breakfast summoned the happy circle together, the plough-boy had heard it at the turnpike, the thresher had told it to the looker, the

the looker to the dairy-maid—thence to the cook—thence rolling like a snow-ball, augmenting its mass as it touched on every tongue, till the chamber-maid ran in to wake the young ladies, who retailed it again to their father and mother.

Mrs. Somerville, who very justly thought there was not such another young man in all the four quarters of the globe, flew in disorder to her son's apartment, where she found him in a tranquil sleep.—She gazed upon him for a few moments, kissed the dew upon his manly forehead, and retired without disturbing him.

The breakfast was delayed, and at length Henry made his appearance.

“ Henry !”

“ Henry!” exclaimed Mrs. Somerville as he entered the room, “ are you wounded?” and hastily springing towards him examined his arm, which he had not unfolded. It had been bound up in a white handkerchief, which Mr. Howard had picked up from the floor, supposing it to have been Henry’s: true, it was marked with an H; but there were two H’s, which could not apply to Henry nor to Mr. Howard, whose name was Charles. A glow of noble animation tinted Henry’s countenance—Fanny smiled. The swelling had entirely subsided, but the bruise appeared violent though not serious. Mrs. Somerville dressed it with

with some restorative herb, and bound it up again in the same handkerchief. "Do you feel this now?" said she to her son, with a look of tender solicitude. "Indeed, my dearest mother," looking upon the handkerchief, "I do feel it very sensibly"—tears mingling with his joy.

They took their seats as Mr. Somerville entered. "Why, George tells me you had nearly been killed last night—it might have been quite as well you had passed your evening at home, Mr. Henry;—but let us hear your story."

Henry then related the particulars, restraining nothing of his mind relative to Harriet, and of his exultation

tation at finding their attachment mutual. When encircled with friends, the heart discloses itself without disguise or reserve; all its intricacies are laid open, and we are enabled to form a just estimate of its real bent and character. Henry availed himself of this occasion to speak out all the raptures of his soul, which had hitherto been suppressed: frequently he interrupted his short narrative by descriptions of the manner, the dress, the elegance of person, the voice, the all of the only woman in the world—
 “ But,” added Henry, “ though no human power can prevent us from tenderly loving one another, I could perceive in all Mr. Howard’s civility

a cautious regard to avoid every encouragement that could lead me to any conversation with him on the subject."

"That was impossible," said his father; "the place and the company present were ill suited to such a conversation."

"None so eligible as that moment!" answered Henry; "the scene had been transacted before them—there was no disguising the truth—Harriet could not faint on purpose—I could not design to be attacked and abused—the ruffians who slunk away in shame could not have preconcerted their parts;—all was natural, unexpected, and we the chief performers.

performers knew nothing previously of the piece we were to perform : What a moment for a father to have— Oh, Sir ! had you been Mr. Howard—” stifling his emotions.

“ My dearest child ! ” said Mrs. Somerville placing her hand upon his shoulder—

“ But I have often said,” continued he, “ how different the world in general live, to what we do. Lord Norbury continued with me from the first; he seemed to shew the utmost solicitude about the event, and the immediate attentions necessary. I thought I discovered more in his countenance than I had ever done before. He told me that Harriet

had recovered, but that she could not, after what had passed, make her appearance again that evening, and had therefore retired to her chamber: it was time then for me to retire also."

" Well, my dear Henry," said his father, " you know all my opinions on these matters : we shall soon see what Mr. Howard thinks of this affair : and we may be well assured that nothing but difference of station can divide our opinions. Such men as he, who have sensible minds and understand the better ways to social happiness, have every opportunity of promoting it; but self love in high life is so much flattered by the magnificence of houses, richness of dress
and

and furniture, and splendour of living, and the general court paid to them, that it is scarcely possible to find instances where these are not the undoubted causes of that separation of ranks of people, which has always created the envy and kept up the dissensions among mankind ; and few men of the first sense are strong enough to resist these delusive marks of happiness : they are like perfumes or concerts of music, very pleasing in the enjoyment ; but a man can know little of true comfort who cannot live without them : as to real happiness, there is no comparison between all this and our stations ; for,

if these are not brightened by gaiety and splendour, they are always unclouded; our days pass on in a succession of mild and pleasing sensations, which equally exclude intemperate pleasure as poignant grief. I am, on this ground, rather doubtful, whether, if you were to marry this girl to-morrow, you would find the happiness you dream of. She will want splendour, you will want retirement;—she will call for her carriage, while you are looking for your spade. What a splendid figure Henry Somerville, Esq. will make in his half-boots and hob-nails, his slouched hat and his tan-burnt face, marching
into

into the centre of his lady's drawing-room, amid feathers, painted faces, muslin trains, and all the soft luxuries of an Asiatic seraglio ! Your wife will, most assuredly, not be pleased with your rustic philosophy ; and it will be too late then to say you thought otherwise."

" Well, Sir," said Henry, " let me be put to the trial ; if both of us are led by the sample of last night, and agree to go half way towards each other's inclination, we shall shew you what our philosophy is."

" God prosper you, my boy !" said his father.

Breakfast being long since at an

end, they all adjourned to the farm, leaving Fanny, who had undertaken to finish the female part of the fables in which they were all soon to appear.

CHAP.

CH A P. XVIII.

THE family at the Park did not assemble till near noon. Mr. Howard had chosen to reflect uninterruptedly on the events of the preceding evening, as they affected his family : he found that his esteem for his friend was not shaken by this unfortunate attachment of his son ; that his daughter had shewn her sentiments undisguised, and that he had little to question on that head ; that though Mr. Somerville's ancient family had been more respectable than the present, he had no foundation for their rising now to any com-

petition with their ancestry ; they had filled respectable posts in the honourable professions of law, divinity, and arms—had risen to high rank in them all, but without hereditary distinctions or connections: that the education he had given his daughter entitled her to a coronet, which she now seemed to despise for the embraces of a man truly worthy, but next above a peasant: that old Somerville was esteemed rich, but had no entailed estates descendible to his family ; and if he had, his son was of a hail vigorous constitution, and stood as fair for long days as his children : that though his daughter was a year or two older than Henry, yet, if he gave his consent to their

their union now, she might in another year have good cause to change her mind, and charge him with not having consulted her welfare: that next winter she was to be introduced at court, would there shine among the first and fairest honours of her country, and add dignity and delight to his name, his fortune, and his family.—Could the wife of Henry Somerville be introduced? He trembled at the thought—started from his chair, and, pacing hastily to and fro across his study, formed his resolution in the determined impossibility of his ever consenting to such an union.

In this state of mind Mr. Howard prepared to join his wife and daughters,

ters, with no very prominent features of encouragement.

“ Allow me, my dear Harriet,” said he, “ to ask you whether you have ever known Mr. Henry Somerville’s situation of mind towards you, or have passed any conversation or correspondence with him ?”

“ None, Sir, in the light you mean.”

“ Be open, my dear child : I wish to learn the real state of the matter between you before I form any determination. Have you had any real cause to think that your evident partiality is well placed ?”

“ Yes, many, Sir ; but never by any conversation or letters.”

“ By

“ By some messages then, or through the favour of your waiting-woman, perhaps ?”

“ No, no, Sir ; you must entertain but a poor opinion of your daughter, to think that she would stoop so low as to form her preference from channels so inferior !”

“ You have found some opportunities of meeting then ?”

“ Most assuredly, but not in secret : neither Henry nor myself, if I know him rightly, would condescend to any measure that was not open ; but when we have met, it has been only when the intercourse of our families offered. Nothing like
pro-

professions ever dropped from his lips; nothing like what we are taught to call assiduities ever disgraced him."

"An odd way of making love, I think, his must have been!" said her father.

"No, my dearest Sir!—his growing affections needed no language to make them known; his feelings required no professions to declare them; if he had taken recourse to any thing so unnatural, Henry Somerville would never have been mine!"

"Astonishing!" said Mr. Howard,
"This is a style of romance I did not expect from you! I remember the day when you have spoken with
much

much respect of the attentions paid you by Lord Norbury and Lord Farrington, and others."

" 'Tis all true," returned Harriet ;
 " but I never spoke, or could speak with respect, of Henry :—to you, Sir, and my beloved mother, I can and will freely say, that the attentions we receive in the usual way can be put down to no other account than respect or politeness ; and this is the utmost they merit. These you have mentioned are very excellent men, but there is something more that must interest our hearts. I see that you are surprised at what I say : why should it be thought extraordinary that I cannot describe to you in words,

words, that which speaks in the eye and in the heart, a silent but more impressive language than the tongue has yet acquired the power to express?—If I had felt a respect for Henry, as I have done for these gentlemen, I had never loved him.’

“ But I want to know from whence this silent love you speak of originated ; for, perhaps, if I were to ask him the same question, he would adopt your language, and talk to me of the sparks he had seen in your eye that lighted up his flame?”

“ That I dare engage he would not,” answered she: “ the honest simplicity of his heart would very openly confess, that your question

was

was the first moment he had ever stopped to enquire. How often, Sir, have I heard you say, that it was by some of the finer fibres of the soul that the affections are held together ! Can it therefore be easy to trace them to their root ? I can trace mine to their parent stem ; beyond that, others must try to account. The kindness of both of you has made me what I am : if it had been less, I had never possessed those finer fibres which have taught me to feel the just distinction between true love and the semblance of it."

" This is avowing then your fixed resolution pretty clearly !" said her father.

" To

“ To pretend, Sir, to conceal from you what you saw was so involuntarily declared to all the world last night, would be the most ridiculous thing on earth; but, Sir, allow me to hope that my happiness and yours will never be separated, and, whatever may be my future destiny—”

“ As to that, Harriet,” interrupted Mr. Howard, “ you will easily conceive that I have formed no such attachment to Henry, though I accord him all the merit he possesses; and that I could not have seen you arrive at a period of life when a connection honourable and suitable to your fortune would be very desirable,

able, without earnestly wishing to promote it."

"It is not there," said Harriet, "I shall ever expect to find my happiness."

"But," said her father, "it may be there I shall expect you to seek it."

"But, Sir, I must then get rid of ideas I have cherished too long."

"And I, Harriet, must on the other hand get rid of those I have cherished from the hour you was born!"

"Sir, they were the ideas of glory and fortune, splendour, and the great magnificence of high rank: they have their charms, 'tis true; but
some-

something assures me, from all I see and hear, that they do not produce happiness;—the men are not true—the women are not, cannot be kind—sincerity is unknown—marriages are formed not for mutual affection, but mutual dignity;—how can they be happy?”

“What!” said Mrs. Howard, “is there no happiness in being introduced with a title—in precedence—in contributing to the splendour and flower of a court?”

“Yes, my dear mother, there is a wonderful charm in all this; but there are many contrasts to overbalance it, which almost every high family feels, that often shew a woman’s

woman's beating heart under all her gaudy drefs."

" You have acquired an unjust opinion of the men," said her mother.

" You have been listening to some nonsensical creature as ignorant as——"

" Indeed, Sir, I have not !—Look at Sir Francis Bloom : he was going to marry about five years ago ; but his character was found out in time to prevent the misery of the woman he pretended an attachment to, and which was in fact only to her purse. How many such does the town abound with at this time, whose appearance and manners are the same with

with the most exalted characters you can name; and who, as far as I see, are equally well received by the most scrupulous! In such a mixed company young women may easily be deceived, for there is no distinction made between the best and the most shameful: and suppose my sister or myself were to give our hands to one of these shocking creatures, would all their splendour make us or you happy?"

"You talk on the subject very fluently," said Mr. Howard: "pray how came you so intimately acquainted with it?"

"I have already said that my information arises from what I have observ-

ed; and when you consider, Sir, that I have been nearly five years introduced as your daughter, and have in that time been engaged in the intimate habits of intercourse with so large a part of the nobility as you are acquainted with, and with so many other families of distinction; it is impossible but that the crowd of their follies, irregularities and distresses, of which it is the strange fashion to make a public boast rather than to conceal, must have come within my observation. I would not make partial comparisons, but I find none of them in a more retired station."

"I understand you well," interrupted

rupted her father; "but you are wrong to have formed so strong a prejudice: and let me tell you, that I have found as warm friendships and as virtuous men in the higher ranks of society, where situation and fortune raise men above the temptation of low and groveling vices, as can ever be found in the inferior orders."

"I don't know them," rejoined Harriet; "I meant the vices of the higher orders."

"You may rely upon it, that as all mankind are alike, they are all subject to the same defects."

"Then we ought never to marry at all."

"My

“ My dear Harriet,” said Mr. Howard, resuming a more serious tone, “ you must allow me to be the guardian of your future welfare as well as your present.—Do you hesitate to trust yourself with me ? Although our opinions differ a little, I am sure you will by and by think with me ; you have certainly flattered this young man too much, and have made all the world believe your attachment inseparable ;—after a few days’ reflection—”

Harriet shook her head in silence—
 “ A change of scene,” continued Mr. Howard, “ becomes necessary, that this silly incident may blow over.” Harriet started—Her father

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took

took his hat—"At such a moment as this you would not," said Harriet, propose a journey?"

"Not to-day, nor to-morrow," answered he; "but as I see no fair prospect or propriety of encouraging this affair to proceed, I think the most prudent step is to change the scene of action."

CHAP. XIX.

IN every eye, as he rode along, Mr. Howard saw the prepossessed expectation, that the affair was determined without an objection; he felt, that to oppose it was to oppose the efforts of struggling nature: he justified himself in the almost unanimous approbation of every man of rank he knew; but this was a faint authority when opposed against the unprejudiced expression of every countenance he met with.

As the road led past the farm, Mr. Howard called there to enquire

for his friend before he rode further, and was directed to him in the granary. Henry, with respectful acknowledgment, thanked him for his great civility, which Mr. Howard received with polite distance; it stopped him from hearing the whole of Henry's open heart. Mr. Somerville said, he had great cause to add apology to his son's acknowledgment for the interruption he had caused to the entertainment; but that, as no one but himself appeared to have suffered in the affray, he might hope Mr. Howard would forget it."

"I wish," said Mr. Howard, "there were not other causes which will I fear make me remember it long:

long : my daughter has been greatly agitated, and is now confined to the house ; and the prodigious notice which the circumstance attracted upon her, is, you know, sufficient alone to alarm a female mind."

" She is not indisposed, I hope ?" said Henry. " Oh, no ! by no means," answered he ; " she has been conversing with me this morning as freely as if nothing had happened. My mind is much occupied," continued he, " on the subject ; and as some remarks were dropped by Henry last night, which seemed to shew particular sentiments towards my daughter, which I confess rather surprised me, I was desirous of availing

myself of this visit, which the late event in your family would otherwise have produced, to understand something in explanation."

" I am sorry," said Mr. Somerville, " that any thing which has passed should have given you concern, or have induced you to open your reasonable expectation that Henry should explain himself in so formal a manner ;—but he shall speak for himself—I know his heart is full, he'll thank you for the opportunity of pouring out more of his burden."

" I cannot hesitate a moment, Sir," said Henry, " to tell you, what you must already know, that my tender affection

affection for your daughter was the cause of my imprudence ; but I thought myself secure from all observation in a spot where I could gratify my fondest feelings without even herself knowing it. I have long cherished for her a love, which, from a difference of station and fortune, I dared not avow : not a soul under heaven but myself ever heard from my lips a sentiment in her praise ; nor had I ever disclosed the secret, though it had worn me to the grave, until I should have discovered something from her which would have encouraged me to speak. But now, Sir, that I have been honoured with holding in my arms the faint-

ing effusions of a passion as sincere as my own, witnessed among testimonies without number, I cease not to think of it, and to speak of it as the first gift of Heaven : and no opposing power on earth—”

“ Stop there, if you please !” said Mr. Howard ; “ there may be powers on earth whom it may be quite as honourable to consult as to oppose.”

“ Pardon me, Sir !” said Henry ; “ my sole idea was, that I would try in any manner my superior claims, against the vain pretensions of any one who might value himself on hopes of his own creating. I have too much veneration for domestic affection,

affection, in which it has been my chief blessing to have lived, to slight yourself or Mrs. Howard so far as not to solicit, at a suitable period, what from all other men I should claim as my undoubted right; and I call it a right, because it has so recently been confirmed to me."

"But I hope," said Mr. Howard, "that this claim will be supported by something more substantial than mere airy attachment: passion cannot last for ever, Mr. Henry; and we have lived a little longer than yourself, and know very well that when these ebullitions have passed away, which they will soon do, there must be a foundation previously laid

future comfort ; and all the usual habits of life must be secured, or dissension supersedes this heighday of the soul."

" Sir, I may perhaps speak too warmly ; but on such a subject, and on such an occasion, it would be culpable to be cool : however, I have felt what I now feel long enough to have thought about it too coolly, to warrant the epithet you were pleased to put upon my attachment when you called it airy:—as to my fortune, you know the little independence I have by my uncle's will—under my present situation my grandfather has left me all his estates, charged with heavy mortgages for money raised

raised to purchase annuities on his life: what little remains I have declared and solemnly vow shall be divided with my family : if you can do me the injustice to suppose that my attachment was built or encouraged by a dependance on Miss Howard's fortune, let me ask you what dependance you can imagine her to have placed upon mine? You cannot think she was ever sordid—whose soul, as her person, is purity itself.—Sir, if it were possible you should withhold from her all or part of your original intentions, can you suppose for a moment that two people united under circumstances so auspicious to their mutual happiness,

with a small certainty of my own to provide the first comforts, should not be successful?"

Mr. Howard smiled—"I see," said he, "that you are ready to find every argument; but, Sir, I thank you for thus openly disclosing your mind. I confess I did not expect," turning to Mr. Somerville, "that this would have been the result of our old acquaintance."

"You regret it then?" said Henry hastily—"Have the goodness, Mr. Howard, to let me know as openly your objections: are they to my family, my fortune, my situation?—I entreat you, Sir, let me hear all you disapprove. I shall esteem it as advice,

advice, by which I may render myself more worthy of the prize."

"I fear my objections," answered Mr. Howard, "will not appear, either in your father's eyes or yours, of sufficient weight to overturn that romantic attachment raised in this retirement, which has thus sequestered you from that world in which my girl has alone been educated to move."

"I know too well, Sir," said Henry, "that our different stations possess your mind more than any other obstacle, and against this I confess I lie at your mercy; but let it not be decided by your judgment who are not to partake of it: if that

or

or any other objection dwell upon your daughter's mind, I bow with unfeigned deference, and submit—but, Sir, she will make me the man she pleases—her wish will be my law.”

Mr. Howard was unable to parry this tide of sincerity, which bore down all he had to offer. Finding himself foiled in every point he had urged, nothing but a final dissent remained to put an end to a connection, his pride and ambition urged him to disapprove. After some pause he rose hastily from his seat, and taking Mr. Somerville by the hand, “I hope, most earnestly hope,” said he, “that this affair between our

young people may not in the least degree affect our old friendship ; but I fear it must not proceed—our views are so different, and our intentions for our children, with every principle of their education, founded on so different a basis.” And without waiting an answer, which he dreaded, he stepped hastily forward out of the granary. While he was descending the ladder, a phaeton with four in hand drove furiously past, followed by two servants, after whom, covered with dust and sweat, in full speed rode Lord Norbury and his groom, with their pistols cocked, and calling out to the driver to stop if he would save his life. The violent
agitation

agitation and screams of the lady absorbed every attention, and in a moment Mr. Somerville, Henry, Mr. Howard, and every man in the farm-yard, rushed out to assist in overtaking them.

The opprobrious epithets of villain! coward! with screams, oaths and imprecations, rent the air, till at length the horses rushing upon a bank in as much terror as any of the parties, threw the lady several feet distance into an adjoining field. She fell without injury, except the agitation natural to female delicacy. The driver, whose skill enabled him to keep the reins and his seat, recovered the level of the road; and, enflamed

enflamed with rage and vexation at the loss of his lady, and the utter impossibility of holding in his horses, contrived to fire his pistol in the very moment that Lord Norbury (whom the delay occasioned by the accident had brought nearer to him) did the same. The noise of the double fire, and the driver having received a wound in his right arm below the elbow, which disabled him, gave the horses new terror and new power; they tore every part of the carriage to pieces, and dashed the charioteer from his seat almost lifeless upon the ground. Lord Norbury, who was ignorant of what fate had pursued the lady, sent his servants on to protect the fugitive,

tive, while he returned to a more valuable and interesting charge.

Mr. Somerville, alarmed and astonished at seeing his daughter in so unfortunate and unaccountable a situation, in vain demanded the cause:—her senses had left her for a while:—as soon as nature had revived, she looked in her father's face for pity and protection. Mrs. Somerville by this time had joined them; and as they were endeavouring to support Fanny to the house, Lord Norbury arrived with all the despair and wretchedness that a worthy man may be supposed to feel under the keen apprehensions of having, though in a cause of justice, sent

sent a fellow creature to the expanse of eternity, with all his sins upon his head. Unaccustomed to the fatigue he had undergone both of body and mind, his exhausted spirits required almost as much assistance as the object of his care. He was unable to unfold the mystery which covered the event.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

AFTER some considerable time, Fanny related, that Mr. Armstrong, whom she remembered to have once dined with at her grandfather's, having called to visit her father, she had acquainted him that the whole family were at the farm except herself; that he had appeared very solicitous to see him, and had pressed her to allow him the honour of driving her thither, which she had, after some hesitation, consented to; that his conversation on the way was general, the distance being so short that it could

could only admit of desultory remarks on the weather, his horses, and the pleasure of driving; "all which," added Fanny, "prepossessed me with no very sudden thoughts in his favour:—but when I shewed him where to turn, and found him quicken his pace and drive beyond the lane, I began to take alarm, and summoned courage to request he would stop, as I had no desire to go further.—It was at this moment that my Lord overtook us, and, demanding of him to stop as he galloped up to the carriage, the horses set off in the manner you have all seen."

"I am utterly at a loss," said Mrs. Somerville, "to see how Lord Norbury

Norbury came to be acquainted with this circumstance so as to be prepared:—'tis evident that he already knew of some rascally design in Armstrong, or he never would have been prepared to attack him."

When his Lordship had recovered a little, he satisfied their anxious doubts, and very agreeably surprised the whole circle by an explicit avowal of his own feelings. "The many delightful opportunities," said he, "which my worthy friend Mr. Howard has offered me of seeing and knowing so much of this excellent family, are but the secondary causes of my highest esteem; but the extraordinary merit I have found here,"

here," looking towards Fanny, whose countenance was hid in down-cast modesty, "has long made its lasting impresson upon me—an impresson which would very soon have disclosed itself, had not the folly and villany of the detestable Sir Francis Bloom, in the moment of his ruin, disclosed to me the issue of a secret plot of wickedness, and charged me to fly, if I would save her whom, I am free to say, I hold most dear."

Astonishment and delight were depicted in every eye. Mrs. Somerville held her daughter's hand trembling with the agitation of native delicacy. She had admired his Lordship, but had never thought of loving him;
his

his rank and superior life were ingredients in his character which had set it above the level of her expectations or hopes : high life had been one of the continual subjects of her father's denunciations ; but rank and fortune, when united with virtue and honour, are blessings in human life which neither man nor woman has power to resist : yet, whatever be the situation of either party, the man is, and must ever be, and ought to feel and acknowledge himself to be, the obliged party. If beauty, if the truest delicacy of sentiment, if every other female charm, excepting those artificial embellishments which the manners of refined life teach us to value,

value, can be conceived to render any woman amiable in the sight of man, here they were concentrated:—for among all the gentler sex, whose constant aim is to improve the beauty of the outward form, and who subdue all mankind by their charms, nature had been lavish of her indulgence, and Fanny had been taught to study nature only.

How often would Lord Norbury repeat among his silent reveries the words of the poet he loved:

“How often, to myself unknown,
 “The graceful, gentle, virtuous maid
 “Have I admired! How often said,
 “What joy to call a heart like hers one’s
 own!”

The servants now returned, and reported that they had assisted in placing Mr. Armstrong upon a bed at a neighbouring inn, and had left a surgeon with him, who had been sent for from the village close by; that his leg was fractured and his arm much injured—that when he was come to himself, he raved, and swore eternal vengeance against My Lord for ruining all his plan, and that he hoped one day to meet him face to face:—that the surgeon had pacified him by the strongest assurances that such feelings would prevent his recovery, and that they had all left him to repose.

“Repose!” said Henry. “Let him
know

know I'll help him to his repose myself, as soon as—” “For shame!” said his mother, “I must desire that none of you interfere—By the blessing of God, we have our dear girl restored to us—would you break up our peace, and rush into destruction?”

“No, no!” said Lord Norbury, “Henry must ask leave of many more now than he thinks for.” They walked to Mr. Somerville’s house—Fanny leaning on her mother’s arm;—but the passing scene filled them with ideas which restrained their conversation.

Mr. Somerville, however, received from Lord Norbury a more particular history of the situation of the

E 2 disgraced

disgraced Baronet, and the intimations he had given him of Armstrong's infamous intentions.

"You see, Sir," said Henry to Mr. Howard, "that Lord Norbury does not think it unworthy to avow his predilection in favour of my sister—why then should it be so adverse to you that I should aspire to your daughter?"

"His Lordship has good reasons, no doubt, and does not stand in my situation as a father."

"But, surely, Sir, he comes into a nearer situation. Allow me, Sir, to hope, that the event of this last hour may encourage me to hope for—"

"I must," interrupted Mr. Howard,

ard, "entreat you to drop a conversation I freely confess gives me uneasiness. I have already expressed my sentiments both to your father and yourself, and I now expect to hear no more upon the subject."

They had now arrived at the garden-gate—Mr. Howard took his leave;—and pressing Lord Norbury by the hand as he mounted—"I shall not expect you till I see you."

CHAP. XXI.

MRS. Somerville could not restrain the impulse of every mistress of a family to treat her guest, who now assumed a more important, at least more interesting, character, with some extraordinary attentions. The best table-cloth, an additional dish, and a few more spoons than usual decorated the table : the best parlour was prepared, and herself and her girls were dressed for dinner in a manner a little more *comme il faut*. The delay which all this occasioned, gave time for the gentlemen to dwell
a little

a little longer on their mutual affairs, and for My Lord to make an open disclosure of his fortune to Mr. Somerville.

Mr. Somerville, who disdained the vanity of deceit, freely confessed that such an union would be an honour he could have had no right to expect; but that the chief thing for his Lordship's consideration would be, the possibility of his changing his mind, when he found his wife a very unequal companion for his splendour. "But I know very well," added he, "that women have much greater facility in falling in with the manners of the great than men can ever acquire: and I believe that men

can far more easily descend than they can."

Henry sighed—" Pardon me," said Lord Norbury ; " your daughter has not less elegance of manners than I have been ever accustomed to see ; and she has much more real politeness, for her civilities are those of nature ; those of more polished life are assumed, and on that account are divested of every interesting charm, and very often of common politeness."

" Your Lordship is pleased to think more of my girl than she deserves ; but I am inclined not to be behind-hand in your opinion of her."

" Oh, Sir ! if you could, how ill
would

would you deserve such a daughter !
 And if I may hope for the free consent of yourself and Mrs. Somerville, but allow me to say chiefly of herself, I know of no obstacle which can or ought to retard my hopes. In the mean time let me trust you will use the lover tenderly, and take his proposal into your earliest consideration. Have I your permission to talk with your daughter on the subject ?”

“ Most willingly,” said Mr. Somerville; “ I have no hesitation to leave it entirely with your Lordship.”

The ladies now made their appearance, and the dinner was announced at the same time. Fanny

E 5 appeared

appeared more lovely than ever—her complexion was warmed by her sensations—her hair was loosely entwined in a muslin turband that pressed a few natural ringlets upon her forehead; and her white dress, gathered round the waist by a sash of pale yellow Persian, shewed the most complete model of nature's excellence that ever smiled in female form.

His Lordship rose as they entered, and, with a delight irresistible in man, confused her by his admiration: he bent respectfully upon her hand, which trembled as he took it to lead her to the other room.—

“—wont

“ ————— went so oft

In outward things to meditate the charm
Of sacred order, soon she seeks at home
To find a kindred order, to exert
Within herself this elegance of love,
This fair inspired delight.”

Mr. Somerville was the chief talker during the dinner; for the situations and sentiments of all the other parties were so differently occupied, that their minds furnished none of those common topics of conversation which are fit to be expressed at such a time.

When the table was cleared, the conversation became rather more general; but Fanny had not yet acquired courage sufficient to bear any part in it with that indifference ne-

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creature,
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Lordship?"
"Much,"

cessary to pursue any of the subjects on which she was so well informed.

Mr. Somerville, who wisely suppressed a great deal of his usual speculations, considered that some repose must be very acceptable to his guest, and therefore proposed to leave him to himself during the afternoon, and, without waiting for his declining it, they all withdrew.

As soon as they found themselves in the garden, the first time that they had yet been all collected together, Fanny took her father's arm; and as he stooped down his head to kiss her hand as it came upon his sleeve, a soft tear stole down her cheek, the tender ornament of her heart.

“ Surely,”

“ Surely,” said the lovely creature,
“ this must be a fairy dream! Can
all this strange affair be true?—Why
has my Lord—”

“ My dearest child,” returned her
father; “ ask thy own merit. Lord
Norbury has a heart full of sensibi-
lity, capable of seeing thine; he ap-
pears to possess a soul worthy of his
rank and fortune, worthy of securing
the happiness of my child.”

“ But, Sir, you used to think me
unfit for rank—Well, whatever lot
I may be doomed to fill, let me love
with sincerity equal to that which
seems to join my brother and Har-
riet Howard.”

“ How do you like his Lordship?”

“ Much,”

“ Much, very much ;—and now—
I must, I suppose, soon like to love
him. I have seen some marks of just
honour and merit about him, super-
rior to many men whom you are
acquainted with. He is a man who
always greatly interested me ; why,
I know not.”

“ I hope,” said her father, “ he
will now interest you more ;—he
will take some early occasion to ask
you to consider favourably of his
passion :—this is the usual way that
lovers take to understand one ano-
ther.”

“ Did my brother take such a
strange circuitous way of learning the
state of Harriet’s mind ?”

I

“ No ;

“ No; for she saved him the trouble; but you, who are stronger than she, must pass through a more regular ceremony.”

“ Surely this is a most ridiculous plan!—Pray, what am I to say? Because if I answer the question in the negative, what becomes of the man? And if I say yes, it will seem so odd.”

“ Nature and your own delicacy will answer for you at the time:—these situations most people pass through, but it is their own foolish hypocrisy which renders them ridiculous. If you prepare your mind for what you shall say, you may rely upon it you will not act with propriety. You will not, perhaps, be
able

able to say any thing; silence is a mark of unaffected emotion so interesting an occasion naturally produces."

"But when do you think this is to take place?"

"Perhaps this afternoon."

"Good Heavens! Am I to say whether I'll have him, this afternoon? I cannot."

"Then say whether you will not have him."

"That might perhaps be more difficult than the other," replied she.

"Then tell him, you'll consider of it."

Fanny now joined her mother,
who

who had been engaged in close debate with her son on Armstrong's situation. She had been so much alarmed ever since his affray at the Park, and knowing his resolute and courageous spirit, that she trembled lest he should risk his life in some unequal combat : and she extorted from him a solemn promise, that, as his sister was safe, he would stifle every symptom of revenge for the insult intended.

CH A P. XXII.

HENRY's spirits were clouded in darkness.—“ I am sorry, my dear Henry,” said his mother, “ to find your spirits so indifferent ; — you seem full of your own ideas, and absent to every thing around you.— Why this altered look ? You were not used to shun our general conversation, but added pleasure to it.”

“ My concern,” answered Henry, “ arises from Mr. Howard's objections, which, I fear, will lead me to some artful secrecy which I abhor,
or

or to a clandestine marriage, which loses half its joy.—The last thing he said to me was to forbid my hopes. Can I be a man and not be cast down? I shall not have further intercourse—I shall be insulted by menaces for intrusion—I shall see the woman of my soul led off from my embrace to fill the arms of some titled slave, whose honours, though external, are to swallow up every sentiment of affection! With such a fortune as Mr. Howard's, one should have thought he possessed the summit of ambition; and yet he indulges hopes of carrying his daughter to the foot-stool of a throne, satisfied with nothing less than her being
 burnished

burnished in the blaze of majesty. Knowing how captivating to a woman's heart are birth and circumstance, can I be less than anxious when I see that my sister is already on the brink of marriage with a man she almost takes on trust, because of these prominent recommendations?"

"If your sister should decide in favour of Lord Norbury, you will recollect how often she has seen him both last summer and this, and that we know his character by our friend Howard.—But you are wrong, Henry, to indulge anxiety so early—it is the very poison of life—the parent of many sins and of more miseries. You are both of you very young, and you
ought

ought to ask yourself, in a world like this, where every thing is so doubtful, where you may succeed in your wish and be miserable, be disappointed and be blest in the disappointment,—what avails this restless stir and commotion of mind? Let me ask you, can your solicitude change the course of things, or unravel the intricacy of human events? You have done, and will I am sure do, all that is incumbent upon you in your situation, and which you owe to the lady; and having done this, wisdom commands you to stop, and to possess your mind in peace. By rushing beyond this point, and by devoting yourself to an immoderate and
fruitless

fruitless concern about the event at present unknown, you lose ground insensibly; because, instead of advancing, you retard your success; and you plant a thorn in your breast that requires very little cultivation to gall you for the rest of your life. Sustain with dignity the weight of your condition, nor meanly acquiesce in grievances within your power to redress. Call up the manly energy of soul with which you are endowed; look on the smiles of active virtue and beneficence, and,

“ Spurning the yoke of these inglorious days,
 “ Mix in their deeds, and kindle with their
 flame.”

Henry was struck with this mode
 of

of reasoning, and began to revive from his distress; but his mind, though it wanted relief, could not avoid resting upon the blank which Mr. Howard had cast upon it.

“My dear Henry,” said his father, “the disappointments we meet with are not always to be resisted—force will not avail against positive facts. The energy I recommend you to exert is over your own mind, to save it from despair;—you will learn by adversity how to value what you enjoy, and not to conceive every blessing swallowed up in the one disappointment you meet with. There are instances where men have lost kingdoms with more fortitude than you
are

are now shewing yourself master of. I will allow that this is an affliction of a secondary kind : but a tolerable share of fortitude is requisite to bear it. But it is within the power of our nature.—Let me give you an example of what I mean, in the story of Vetrano, mentioned by Gibbon.”

They sat down together in the arbour. Mrs. Somerville and her daughters joined them.

“ In the conspiracy of Magnentius and old Vetrano against Constantius, affairs were at last reduced to a meeting of Constantius and Vetrano, on a wide plain near Constantinople, where the united armies were assembled. Constantius delivered an eloquent

an eloquent harangue to the armies ; and the officers who surrounded the tribunal, and were instructed to act their parts in this extraordinary scene, confessed the irresistible power of reason and eloquence, by saluting the Emperor Constantius as their lawful sovereign. The contagion of loyalty and repentance was communicated from rank to rank, till the plain of Sardica resounded with the universal acclamation of ‘ Away with these upstart usurpers ! Long-life and victory to the son of Constantine ! Under his banners alone we will fight and conquer ! ’

“ The shouts of thousands, their menacing gestures, the fierce clash-

ing of their arms, astonished and subdued the courage of Vetricano, who stood, amid the defection of his followers, in anxious and silent suspense. Instead of embracing the last refuge of despair, he submitted to his fate; and taking the diadem from his head, in the view of both armies, fell prostrate at the feet of his conqueror.

“ Constantius used his victory with prudence and moderation; and raising from the ground the aged suppliant, whom he affected to style by the endearing name of father, he gave him his hand to descend from the throne. The city of [“]Prusa was assigned for the exile or retirement
of

of the abdicated monarch, who lived six years in the enjoyment of ease and affluence. He often expressed his grateful sense of the goodness of Constantius, and, with a very amiable simplicity, advised his benefactor to resign the sceptre of the world, and to seek for content, where alone it could be found, in the peaceful obscurity of a private condition."

"Would you," said Mr. Somerville, "have applauded Vetricio more if he had rushed upon his sword in the presence of his armies? Or would he have deserved the praise of posterity if he wreaked his vexation in the blood of Constantius? On the other hand, he shews before

thousands of witnesses whose eyes were upon him, that he had courage to resign to their unconquerable power, instead of plunging them in blood ; and that by listening to their voice, and the voice of reason, he could spend the rest of his days in virtuous ease, without envying or repining at the success of his rival.

“ Come then, Henry, no longer let your brow be clouded thus—we require your advice, and look to you to participate in your sister’s affairs as well as your own ; it is selfish to deal only with yourself.” And calling to his daughter Mary, he bad her come and repeat the verses she had learned last week about cheerfulness.

“ I don’t

“ I don’t think I can find the copy, Papa.”—“ How so ?” said Fanny ;
“ I gave it you this morning.”—

“ No, indeed, my Lady !”—curt-
feying and putting on a grave face
at her sister.

“ You saucy thing !” said her
mother. The paper was produced,
and little Mary read the following
lines :—

“ COME, Cheerfulness, triumphant Fair,
Shine through the painful cloud of care ;
Oh sweet of language, mild of mien,
Oh virtue’s friend, and pleasure’s queen !
Fair guardian of domestic life,
Blest banisher of home-bred strife !
Nor sullen lip, nor taunting eye,
Deforms the scene where thou art by :

No sick'ning husband damns the hour
That bound his joys to female power:
No pining mother weeps the cares
That parents waste on hopeless heirs:
Th' officious daughters pleas'd attend;
The brother rises to the friend:
By thee our board with flowers is crown'd,
By thee with songs our walks resound,
By thee the sprightly mornings shine,
And ev'ning hours in peace decline!"

J. BUNCLER.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

“**I** PROTEST,” said Mrs. Somerville, “here comes Lord Norbury down the green walk!” They were in unison to receive him; but Fanny was so much agitated as to desire they would not leave her. Indeed there was little cause for the precaution; for after sitting with them a short time, playing with the little girl, and being rather sparing of his attentions to Fanny, he rose from his seat, and expressed a wish to talk apart with Mr. Somerville and his son.

As they walked together, his Lordship observed, that, after the kind permission he had received to open his mind more at large to Fanny, it might seem strange that he should not avail himself of the first opportunity; but that, since they had left him, he had received an abusive letter from Armstrong, demanding satisfaction; and that being well enough to hold a pistol he had urged him to come to him on the following day, and fight him in his room—and that his misery and vexation, till he had satiated his vengeance, gave him no hopes of recovery.

“ And thus the fool hopes to recover,

cover, by adding blood to wickedness!" said Mr. Somerville. " I have answered his letter," continued Lord Norbury—" that I could not stoop to fight any man upon such unequal terms, and therefore that as soon as he should be more recovered, he knew where to find me, and that then I should be ready to meet him. If I may hope, Sir, for the affection of your daughter, I would not too deeply engage it in a cloud of anxiety, or disturb the charming harmony in which you live, by asking for her hand until an affair of such a nature as this is concluded. I am thus unfortunately bound to tear myself from you, and I must leave

F 5. yours

your daughter to the guardianship of that protection which I hope will watch over her merit, and preserve her from every woe!"

He burst into a flood of tears—Henry could not bridle his ungoverned rage.—“Is your Lordship then determined to stake your life against that of a ruffian you have once overcome?—Is it an honour incumbent on your Lordship, to exclude yourself from happiness in order to yield to the threats of a cowardly bravo? Will you condescend to gain a victory over a scoundrel whose name disgraces your lips?”

“My very excellent friend,” said

Lord Norbury; "we must by the laws of honour and the customs of our country submit to affairs of this kind, though we know them to be wrong: and much as I esteem you for your noble indignation, the prejudices of the world will value my reputation for courage, and for fidelity to your sister, by my conduct in her defence."

"It cannot be, my Lord! it must not be!—Let me go to him and shew him the fallacy of such a measure!"

"It would be reasoning with a madman, and disgracing me!" interrupted his Lordship.

"By all that's sacred," cried Henry, "it shall not be!—If I am

to believe Mr. Howard that I never can expect his daughter, what an useless being am I ! Recall your letter, and tell him, I am injured by him most (and he has injured me most) in his insult upon my sister ; that before he pays the debt of gallantry to you, he shall answer that of duty to her brother !” Leaving no time for reply, he rushed to the stable-yard, which joined the garden, and called loudly to the boy to saddle his horse.

“ If it should please Heaven to take the rascal, by this hand”—said Henry, looking back with eyes flaming with indignation.

“ You must fly your country, or
surrender

surrender to its justice," interrupted his father, who had followed him—
 "and if you fall!" — clasping his hands together—

"I then, Sir, should leave my family in the bosoms of yourself and Lord Norbury ;—and Harriet with her father planning high schemes for her happiness!"

He sprang suddenly from them, and, leaping the garden-wall, mounted his horse and was out of sight in a moment.

Mr. Somerville and his Lordship ran after him, both calling upon him to return, and leaving the ladies in a consternation not to be described.

The distance was at least three miles

miles to the inn where Armstrong was confined;—they ordered their horses, to overtake Henry, and hurried on with all haste. There was a considerable hill upon the road, and as they went along they discovered him upon the summit by his grey horse, making all the speed in his power; so that they despaired of preventing the interview they had so much cause to dread.

“ This is headstrong indeed ! ” said Mr. Somerville : “ perhaps before we arrive something fatal may have happened, and on either side it is misery in the extreme ; ” They pursued their way in the utmost agitation of mind. When they arrived,
they

they were greatly relieved by seeing Henry in earnest parley with the landlord, who seemed to be opposing him; but upon Mr. Somerville's coming up, he acquainted him that he had received strict orders from the surgeon to suffer no person to go to Mr. Armstrong's room till his return; for that the agitation of his mind and his restlessness at his confinement, which had deranged and disappointed some important business he had to transact elsewhere, added to the hurry of spirits excited by the letter he had written to Lord Norbury, had contributed to accelerate his fever; and being a large athletic man, it was essential to his recovery

recovery that he should try to get some rest, or the accident might prove fatal to him.

Foiled in this part of his resolution, Henry felt his passions and his views at a stand; but he was still deaf to every argument, and was with the greatest difficulty prevented from the desperate resolution of waiting till Armstrong should be ready to receive him. His father peremptorily insisted upon his immediate return with him, and Lord Norbury pursued his way, overcome with fatigue, to the Park.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXIV.

“ I SHOULD have thought, Henry,” said Mr. Somerville, as they rode gently home, “ that you had formed principles strong enough to oppose the folly of expecting satisfaction for an injury, by ruining your own and your friends’ happiness, in attempting the life of a wretch unworthy to be your competitor. What would you have gained if you had destroyed him? or, if you yourself were to have rushed into eternity on such an errand as the seeking revenge upon another’s life, what

what would you have gained after you had made all those unhappy whom you are thus falsely pretending to serve? The greatest courage is cool and sedate; it spares itself where it ought, and exposes itself only where occasion makes it necessary : but you have been rushing headlong into the enormity of hasty violence, and have been saved from the indelible infamy of the offence you were blundering into, by the resolution of the landlord."

"Sir," replied Henry, "nothing but such an occasion as this, and the situation of all the parties, could have justified a duel: I have no secret revenge against Armstrong, unless to punish

punish infamy can be called so; and if so, justice must be branded with that name. I have never seen him but once or twice, and then never spoke to him; but a warm sense of his guilt, of the shameless insult offered to us all, and the high value I set upon my sister's happiness, which shall not be interrupted by the arm of so base an assassin; her character in the world, and her own delicacy, all seem to awaken those calls of energy which a woman cannot exert herself, and which she must therefore rely upon her friends for, as essential to her cause."

"Did you ever know then, that a woman's delicacy or character was
improved

improved by this ordeal of blood; or was she ever made happier by it? If she has any regard for the person who risks his life for her, her misery is sealed from the instant of the challenge—if she has no regard for him, I hope you'll agree with me that duelling is a very silly piece of business."

"How then," resumed Henry, "will My Lord divest himself of it? If I have rushed thus hastily into it, he has sought it deliberately; and when it is known that he nourishes the expectation of it from Armstrong's recovery, and that his silence to my sister, after all that has passed this morning, is explained in this man-

ner,

ner, will he find more justification? Or perhaps lords have, among their numerous other privileges, this additional one of hazarding their own brains when they please."

"Lord Norbury is master of his own actions," said Mr. Somerville; "I cannot controul them, but it is my duty to urge to you every argument against such rashness. Besides, you have here two antagonists to chastise—the plotter as well as the executer. Why don't you find out Sir Francis Bloom, and charge him at the same sport?"

"He is too contemptible for the notice of any one who has the feelings of a man," returned Henry indignantly—

nantly—"Armstrong has been a more prominent rascal: he has executed one plot here; but I learn that he is the plotter and the villain everywhere—Surely to punish such a man is doing God service."

"No, Henry! God requires no service of this sort;—he will mark by the finger of his own ineffable justice, every one who does evil—he does not delegate to mortals, all in some degree guilty, his power of either censure or punishment. Forbid it Heaven, that, when you kneel in his awful presence, you should feel the frown of his unchanged decrees for having presumed to violate the sacred order of his laws! Imagine
your-

yourself for a moment asking for that mercy which you refused to another; can you, while refusing to be entreated and disdaining to forgive, conceive an instance of more unnatural and extravagant arrogance? Even among men, the gross indecency of intemperate anger or cool revenge renders the person the scorn and the scoff of every one who knows him."

"But, Sir," said Henry, "though this may be all just, let me ask you if there is or can be a greater mortification in life than for any of us, and for a young innocent and virtuous woman to suffer in her reputation, to have her fair fame blasted by the breath of infamy, and for it to
assume

assume the air of probability and walk abroad unpunished? Who can suffer a wounded spirit?"

"Thou hast a noble generous soul, my Henry!" said his father; "but you have yet to learn that to restrain its energy is an interest as well as a duty to be cultivated. It is the secret of happiness to make it as independent as possible: our afflictions become intolerable, because we ourselves sharpen their sting and warm their poison: the feuds and animosities between families and neighbours, which disturb the intercourse of human life, and collectively compose half the misery of it, have their foundation in the want of a forgiving temper,

temper, and can never cease but by the exercise of this virtue on one side or on both."

"But, sir, I am not wanting, I hope, in this disposition—I acknowledge that I feel resentment for the wrong done to us; but I think also, that there is a benefit to society in making men repent of their crimes, that they may restrain them."

"This is the office of the magistrate alone," said his father.—"If you usurp his authority, you rouse the lion upon yourself—and thus find two enemies.—Would you desire that a serpent should sting you twice?"

"Am I then to submit to every
VOL. II. G affront?"

affront? to receive injuries, and be afraid to punish them—to yield to the scorn of general contempt?”

“ No, Henry, no ! Will not your courage be more nobly tried, by shewing to all the world that you disdain the folly of custom, and reject the false meteor of glory which dazzles in a duel, but fades instantly into misery and contempt?—Is your whole life and your happiness to be plunged into the darkest abyss of despair, because you have received one insult? Is it generous to charge your reputation with a sin, by attempting to preserve it crimsoned with blood? Is it an act of contemptible

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temptible fear, you seem so much to
dread, to shun base assassination?
True courage is to resist evil, not
to plunge deeper into it.

G 2 CHAP.

C H A P. XXIV.

IT was quite evening when they arrived at home. The anxiety of Mrs. Somerville and the young ladies was in some measure relieved by their return—though the suspense in which they had remained so long, had interrupted their usual occupations, which were accustomed to render their time rapid in its flight.

Mr. Somerville's system disdained a smooth representation of unfavorable facts—he held it childish, and next to sinful, thus to destroy the natural strength of the mind, by disguising

guising truth, and rendering it unable to bear her language : he therefore related in plain terms the simple narrative of the events of the past few hours.—

Fanny felt what nature would dictate to every woman to feel in her situation—more anxiety for her brother whom she loved, than for her lover whom she only esteemed :—— but the more remote considerations of the probability of her never seeing him again, of never answering to the name of Lady Norbury, and of being born perhaps to blush unseen, were sufficient to take their secondary place in her breast, to secure a sigh to the departing spirit of

determined to pay their last tribute of respect. They had appointed Mr. Gregson, their attorney, to meet them, on whose fidelity and uprightness they had always placed a well-deserved reliance.

Mr. Gregson had been long acquainted with the family—he had received a liberal education, and had formed ideas in general superior to the low mechanical part of his profession, where drudgery and rapid chicane go hand in hand, to oppress the weak, to starve the hungry, and to expose the houseless child of want ! He had seen enough of the miseries of mankind to rejoice in relieving them—he had felt the sorrows of
weeping

weeping indigence; and had often disarmed half its terrors by acting the mediator instead of the executor of revenge.—Could all his profession be reduced to such as moved on his level, the popular prejudice would be forgotten, and the servants of distributive justice would be dignified with the shield of protection, instead of the fasces of execution!

Such was the man, in whose skill and uprightness Henry was about to repose the whole conduct of his affairs.—

The funeral was sumptuous, but its pomp excited no tears—Even old Ralph had been forgotten, and in his turn he forgot to weep—“For one

good turn deserves another," said the old man.—He had been accustomed to buffet the elements, and beat about in the fortuitous gales of fortune, and he expected nothing else for the rest of his days :—but it happened about this time that the gate-keeper at the park was ill—he soon after died ; and Mr. Howard did not suffer old Ralph to live long upon the scanty earnings of his last place : he resided for the rest of his days in the Park lodge ; and, when he died, there was not an old gossip within three miles of the church-stile that did not drop a tear, and repeat these words printed over his grave :
 " Poor Ralph is silent for evermore !"

Mr.

Mr. Gregson found, on perusal of all the writings he could discover, that the charges upon the estate would leave a residue of nearly one thousand pounds. Henry therefore determined to sell the manor and mansion-house, and to retain a small farm contiguous to his father's ; which, with a trifling balance in money after payment of the incidental expences, would enable him to fill up all his time in cultivation, resolving to adhere to his first design of casting the produce into the common stock. He rejoiced in this acquisition, which would render him complete master of a farm, and yet preserve him in the habits of social in-

tercourse with his amiable and beloved family : and he considered, that if ever such extraordinary fortune should happen, as the marriage of his sister to Lord Norbury, and of himself to Harriet Howard, he might thus be enabled to make a small provision for his sister Mary, the growing delight of every eye—the darling of almost every heart !

Two days having been nearly occupied in forming all these arrangements, Mr. Gregson was left in full possession of the premises, with authority to conduct the sale, and to take such measures as should, without the law's delay, put every one in possession of his own.

Mr.

Mr. Somerville and his son returned to their expecting family, whose unaffected excellence never shone so conspicuously as at their meeting after an absence however short. The charming smile that welcomes a quick approach, the hastening step that treads swiftly over domestic ground, or the interesting covetousness of every word rapidly related, that glorify the first meeting of a family devoted to each other, is, to say the least of it, a shadow of heaven!

All the subjects of their present attention were full of interesting importance.—The death and funeral
of

of old Mr. Somerville, the gloom which hung still upon Henry's brow, and the situation of Lord Norbury had all their weight: but Henry claimed their principal regard. The anxious earnestness of his mother's countenance expressed a desire to penetrate into his intention too keenly to need her questioning him upon it:—he, whose soul was made up of domestic love, delayed not to give her the most solemn assurances that he was convinced of the folly and rashness of duelling, and that he would not, unless it should be necessary to stand between Lord Norbury and Armstrong, hazard

his life in such hands:—this was the utmost he could be persuaded to promise, it was the utmost he could persuade himself to undertake.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXV.

WHEN Lord Norbury, to whom it is necessary for us to return, arrived at the Park, Mr. Howard was engaged with company, and therefore was not made acquainted with the incident already mentioned, until the following day. In the mean time a servant, who had been upon the road, and stopped for refreshment at the inn where Armstrong was confined, seeing the hasty approach of Henry, followed by his father and Lord Norbury, had thought it most prudent to pursue his

his way, and arrived in the kitchen time enough to relate the whole adventure, with a multitude of aggravations, before Miss Howard's woman was called to dress her young lady ; —who, lending a willing ear to all that came from that corner of the globe, was tortured with the suspense of sending the woman no less than three times to Joe, to learn whether Mr. Armstrong had lost an arm or a head—whether Lord Norbury had killed him or Fanny—and whether young Mr. Somerville, or his father, or his lordship, or Armstrong, or the landlord, or all the people in the farm-yard, had not, or which of them had actually died and come to
life

life again : and after all, poor Harriet was utterly unable to guess what it was that had befallen the whole party.—

The incoherency of the story was the only source of consolation she could collect ; for it shewed her the folly of encouraging anxiety, when she could not explain the cause of it, even to her own imagination ; and yet something like absence and an earnest solicitude frequently sent her mind upon the wings of busy thought far away from the circle she was engaged in, till Lord Norbury made his appearance. She could then assure herself, that at least one worthy friend was safe ; but then “ he might have remained

remained alone to tell the tale!" What cruel destiny enchains a female heart, that, by the shackles of cultivated life, she should be reprehensible if, under Harriet's situation, she should have ventured to ask some news of her dearest friend!—The fatigue his lordship had undergone since he last left the Park, and the flock of anxiety he had lately added to it, rendered his brow heavy and depressed, contrary to his usual agreeable manners: he entered the room and paid his respects to every one present, without that cordial pleasantness which had always secured him the general favor;—he bowed respectfully to Mrs. Howard, and,
after

after making a slight obeisance to the circle, sat down by his friend, with whom he fell into conversation for some time.—Mrs. Howard, who, whatever might be her opinion of the match with Henry, felt as a woman, and knew her daughter's wish, therefore asked his lordship if he had left all his friends well, which he answered in the affirmative. The cards and the conversation then became general, and in the vortex of the ceremony he withdrew unobserved to his chamber.

The usual civility of a visit to a family upon the decease of any relation, became a serious point with Mr. Howard, who, though he strongly objected

objected to the union of his daughter with Henry, yet had that high esteem for his friend, which he was very unwilling to divert into any other channel; he looked round among all his acquaintance, and could find none who was worthy to take the place Mr. Somerville held in his esteem. If Harriet should be of the party, it would look like acquiescence—if she staid at home, he had little doubt but Henry would be found in the evening behind some alcove again. He resolved to trust to chance, and as he should himself be with them, he thought he could keep a ready eye upon their proceedings.

Under these impressions, the coach

was

was ordered for the ladies, and Lord Norbury drove Mr. Howard in his phaeton, on the following day.

Some of the common people, and perhaps some of their own servants not very hostile to the wish, forgetting that forms and ceremonies in such cases would have drawn the gentleman the other way, and that the ladies would have waited at home for him, spread the report that the wedding was to be at Mr. Somerville's parish-church, and actually wished them joy as they passed along—and the parish clerk, out of his overflowing zeal for the propagation of such glad tidings, set the old bells in the steeple a-ringing, and
fixed

fixed up a green bow at the weather-cock, to shew to all distant travellers what sport was going forward.

When they arrived at the green gate, the whole family went out to meet them. Conceive the joy!—Reader, do you possess the soul of human love?—Have you the glow of sympathy thrilling through thy tenderest vein? Have you ever known the charm of conscious, dutious, unabating affection, gushing at every pore, swelling at every respiration, trembling on each lip?—Conceive, if you have not lost it in unchaste desire, if you have not burst the charm of innocence by disdaining the bond of untainted fidelity, if you have
not

not suffered the ebullitions of honest nature to be wasted by the blasting mildew of pollution—conceive the joy that beat high in Henry's bosom, once again to press his Harriet's hand, and almost again, as he handed her from the carriage, to clasp her to his heart!—The mid-day sun never diffused a warmer glow over all the expanse of animated nature, than Henry's noble countenance expressed.

Soon after they had been assembled, Fanny, who longed to hear whether she had been made the subject of conversation at the Park, and Harriet, who was equally desirous of knowing the events of the past week

1

with

with more certainty than she had yet learned them, proposed to each other in the same moment a walk in the orchard.

“ If we ever loved one another,” said Harriet, “ it seems, my dear Fanny, as if we now have more cause for our friendship than ever ; and yet our affairs are far from being similar—for in yours nothing offers to prevent——”

“ Indeed !” interrupted Fanny—
“ Is the duel given up then ?”

“ Good Heavens—Duel ! what duel ? who is going to fight a duel ? —Pray tell me what you mean—is not every thing settled ?”

“ I don’t know,” said Fanny ; “ but

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I am

I am given to understand that My Lord is to fight a duel with Armstrong; and therefore I am so far from the situation you imagine, that I must not indulge any hopes that it may ever take place."

Harriet was as much relieved, as a fish which escapes by the fracture of a net; adding as she gained breath, that if that was all her anxiety, Fanny might rest in very good security, and might begin to order her clothes—"For," added she, "I know it is all settled, and you are to live in Portman-square, and in Suffolk—and your sedan is to be lined with white satin, and your favours are to be edged with white silver-lace, and the men are to wear

wear large gold epaulettes, and your Ladyship is to be every thing in town, till another wedding happens, and carries the tide that way. And so perhaps this duel you talk of, is not to be after all—”

“ Heaven send it may not !” said Fanny ; “ for it involves us all in a world of anxiety : for my brother declares it shall not be, till that Armstrong has given him satisfaction—and we all thought they were going to fight two days ago ; but he has been prevailed upon by my father to assure us, that he will not interfere unless it should be necessary.”

“ And pray,” said Harriet with

great earnestness, "what is the necessity which will call him out?"

"I do not know," answered Fanny, "but that of preventing any misfortune to Lord Norbury, and of saving anxiety to ——"

"To your Ladyship, I suppose," said Harriet quickly, attempting to put on a rallying air. "I should have imagined he would have thought also that there were others who ought to be consulted on such a step."

"Ah, my dear Harriet!" said Fanny, "there lies the chief cause of his violence!—He says, that your father has given him a positive refusal, and that therefore ——"

"No,

“No, Fanny! therefore he has not a right to throw himself away! To you I will not hesitate to say how much Henry is truly mine—I have heard nothing of this positive refusal—if it were so, I should scarcely have been brought here to-day. No, no!—tell him from me, that, whatever commands I am bound at present to obey, there may come a time when I will shew him how unalterably—— But they are all coming into the garden—Let us all tenderly love one another, and we shall be happy; and Lady Norbury shall become the protectress and confidante of her friend.”

CHAP. XXVI.

THE conversation in the parlour had been far less interesting—Mr. Howard preserved the cool damp of politeness, which shuts up communication. The ladies had passed a few words across the table, and Mr. Howard purposely occupied the time in an endeavour to divert their minds from more tender subjects, by speaking on the topics of public conversation, which were then directed to the death of the celebrated Captain Cook; not because it had just happened, but because some prints and
a the-

a theatrical representation had revived the subject in the public mind : and he strove to engage Henry's attention, in order to keep him in the room:

" It is very questionable," said Mr. Somerville, " whether voyages of discovery have ever been in the main really useful, if you consider the ends they have all produced."

" They have always been accounted honourable," said Lord Norbury, " and calculated for the noble purpose of enlightening the minds of ignorant nations—diffusing christianity, and rendering mankind therefore more happy."

" But, if these effects had follow-

ed," said Mr. Somerville, " I would not have joined in applauding voyages of discovery.—What tribes among mankind, either east or west, have we rendered happy by visiting them? It appears to me, that we have disturbed their tranquillity, deluged their shades with blood, set up ruin and horror in the place of peace, and with the name of religion burned their altars, and disgraced our own by intolerant persecution: India, America, Africa, islands, deserts, all have felt the contagion of European injustice, wherever Europe has extended her flag! I pitied the fate of Captain Cook as sincerely as any man: but had I been a native of Owyhee,

Owyhee, I should have assisted in his death. Had not the vices of Europe corrupted Otaheitean blood? You will find some hints of this in Mr. Dunbar's *Essays*, who says, that while so heavy a charge against either France or England is retorted on each other by those nations, the natives of the happy Island will have cause to lament that any European vessel ever touched upon their shores."

"Then the original design," said Henry, "has been frustrated?"

"Not entirely so," said Mr. Howard. "We have brought home some curious specimens of their manners, customs, clothing, and instruments

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of war; and planted our English flag upon their settlements."

"It is true," said Mr. Somerville. "And to what benefit to either party—exclusive of the practice of navigation? Is there any established trade carried on between both countries, and to what advantage?"

"In some of the islands we have established good factories, which carry on extensive trade, and produce great influx of property and revenue at home—And when you sail that way, you find a place of refuge."

"What I have advanced," said Mr. Somerville, "is upon a general view of the whole subject, not on a partial

trial one of certain districts. Our enterprises have mostly failed for want of forming a good understanding and concurrence with the other nations : if nations would establish a concert and union among themselves, all regions of the earth might become habitable, and the elements themselves almost cease to rebel."

" These are good speculations," replied Mr. Howard : " but you must make a system for men, not men for a system : your language and philosophy will do well for the millennium which is approaching, when our swords will be turned into pruning-hooks."

" And this," resumed Mr. Somers-

ville, "would be happy for us, would it not? Why should we not learn to wage war with the elements instead of our own kind; and exert all our united prowess in the recovery of our patrimony from chaos, instead of adding to its empire?"

"But until that time arrives," said Mr. Howard, "the good of our country claims the first care and advancement."

"There can be no justice," replied Somerville, "in that system which designs a particular good to any part, and does not consist fairly with the good of the whole in itself. In order to render any partial good really and truly just, you must shew
the

the certainty of its not producing an equal portion of evil—and that must not be a mere matter of speculation, but of positive proof.”

The ladies here interrupted the continuance of these enquiries, by proposing a walk in the garden, which the rest of the party were not sorry to join. Our worthy philosopher was generally very strong in his conceptions, but often bordered upon the dogmatical ; and though, for a country gentleman, he had acquired an extraordinary stock of very practical knowledge of the world—he often plunged too deeply into philosophical refinement, which rendered
some

some of his opinions rather more ingenious than useful.

Henry had relished this conversation, for obvious reasons, much less than the rest, and, finding no opportunity of leaving the party, marked by the general absence of his manner and countenance, that he momentarily suffered the penance of a prisoner who had a near view of the charms of freedom: it was not unobserved by Mr. Howard, who, although he strove to prolong the conversation, was not too old to have forgotten that such a penance deserved a reasonable compassion.

As soon as they had joined in the garden,

garden, they were surprised by a letter, which was brought to Lord Norbury, in the hand-writing of Sir Francis Bloom—it appeared to have been written in agitation and in extremes.

“ MY DEAR LORD,

“ My last moments are greatly disturbed—my mind is an uninterrupted agony!—If I ever loved you, think how much I now feel to have wronged you!—But I thank God, you prevented the effects of the plot.—Do not speak of me to the Somervilles, it will give me pain to know that they add their curses to yours—a few days, most probably a few hours, will shorten the
pain.

pain to which I am doomed in this world—Heaven knows I pay dear for all the pleasures I have found in it—Perhaps this may soften what I have yet to expect in the next—While you are reading this, which I have made great effort to write, I shall sink into hopeless night.—May you be happy!—

Your lost

FRANCIS BLOOM."

King's-Bench.

P. S. For God's sake do not fight with Armstrong!"

The postscript was written with eager haste, and much worse than the

letter ; and a rent of the paper near the wafer evidently shewed that the advice it contained had been forgotten before he had sealed it. Two days had elapsed since they had heard any thing of Armstrong ; their curiosity was fairly excited ; and yet they hesitated to enquire, lest they should appear anxious for his destruction. Lord Norbury's manners and attentions to Fanny, not a little aided by Harriet's continually pleading in his cause, rendered his moments more precious in the country : but his duty, or rather what he conceived to be his duty, obliged him to add another excuse for his absence or silence, and to give him the un-
 fortunate

fortunate but untrue appearance of indifference towards her. Their situation was peculiar—they knew each other's sentiments, though they had never heard them—they saw their union approach, without personal explanation; and they were actually building up a certain dependence on each other for mutual happiness, without the most distant avowal to each other of their design to promote it.—Women are not in general content with a man who does not speak for himself—and men are seldom restrained by clashing circumstances from securing the heart they are aiming to possess, after all obstacles are surmounted. But the sincere delicacy

licacy of Lord Norbury's mind—a consciousness that very probably his rank might add something in the preponderating scale, and the eminent admiration he daily nourished in his heart for Fanny's extraordinary beauty and native unaffected elegance, restrained him from attempting her hand, until his own were free from contrasted obligations.

He took Henry aside; and, as he shewed him the letter, Henry marked with suspicious indignation the substance of the postscript.—

“ There is black villainy in this—and shall be sifted to its rotten core.—Your Lordship will allow me to insist that you will not risk yourself
with

with either of these rascals—Perhaps the feeble hands of Sir Francis may have given strength to Armstrong's wickedness—Let us disbelieve this letter, till we see further."

"Bloom can gain nothing by any design upon me," said Lord Norbury.

"True," replied Henry, "but he is the tool of that envious Armstrong."

Lord Norbury, who knew more of the Baronet than Henry could be supposed to do, and remembered some traits of a generous disposition, resisted this advice, and determined to go to town, with assurances that
he

he would take such precautions as should secure him from injury in a visit to the prison—and in the meantime commissioned Henry to avoid seeing Armstrong, but to learn his situation.

Affairs being thus arranged between them, they rejoined the party, who were then preparing to separate. —Lord Norbury acquainted them generally, that some particular affairs called him immediately to town, and that he hoped to return in a day or two: “And then I shall also hope,” said he in a lower key to Mr. Somerville, “to be discharged from these embarrassments.”

Mrs.

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Mrs. Howard prevailed on Fanny to accompany them—and Henry, much to the discomfiture of Mr. Howard, rode by the side of the carriage.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVII.

AS Lord Norbury drove Mr. Howard with him, the opportunity offered of some decisive conversation relative to the present posture of their affairs. "Has your Lordship then fully made up your mind to marry Miss Somerville?"—

"Most certainly."

"You know their late disappointment—that they will have nothing from the old gentleman?"

"I find," replied his Lordship, "that when Gregson has paid all
the

the debts, there will not be more than one small farm in this neighbourhood for Henry, which he has declared he shall hold for the general benefit of his family.—You know it is not so material to me—and sure I am, that if ever I should be so fortunate as to introduce Fanny to the world, she will not need pecuniary recommendations to shed lustre upon my family. I find her brother a generous young man, formed for a line of life superior to this rustic retirement; and I doubt not I shall have the pleasure of seeing him fill some important situation in the field or the cabinet.”

“Do you think so highly of him?”

him? I allow he has merit, but I fear your Lordship sees him through the medium of his sister."

"Time will shew that," said Lord Norbury. "If ever man had a heart and a spirit that dignified human nature, they are to be found in Henry Somerville. You must know him as well as I do—you must see his merit, and you must know that your daughter sees it. But, my dear Howard, there is something more you must know—that nature is irresistible.—You might live in our order of society for a hundred years, and not see such an undissembled affection as now subsists between them. I will allow that you

had been made more happy if Henry had been a Peer, or had the expectation of being so: but you may certainly bring him into parliament, the army or navy, or the law or the church. Your fortune and family will secure him respect; and if you wish that your daughter should not be said to have married a plebeian, get a seat for him, or the promise of a seat, before the wedding—It is not at all unlikely that old Templeton should die, who represents one of my boroughs, and you are at free liberty to bind me to the promise of putting him in there!”

“Oh, I thank you very kindly!—
But I have not thought favourably
enough

enough yet about it, to come to a conclusion of so much consequence.”—

“ Why ?—You have known their attachment long enough—you cannot need fortune—merit and virtue you have found here in the extreme—influence and power you possess—you may also command what little belongs to me—And I will engage that Henry will do you credit as a son-in-law.”

“ Perhaps he may.—To be sure, my daughter has not received any other offer.”

“ I rather think,” said My Lord, “ she has discouraged them.—I speak for myself : for the world you know and the silly newspapers have often

put us together: but I never met with any thing in Harriet, but that sort of distant affability which in sensible language says, 'I like you very well as a man, but I like somebody else as a lover!'

Mr. Howard was thoughtful; and silence ensued for near half a mile.—Lord Norbury knew how to avail himself of a favourable moment—“Why,” said he, “cannot you decide?—You love to contribute to the happiness of others—what a full tide of it would flow all round you!—Take Henry apart when we arrive, and see whether he is less than I have described. I will venture to stake my own wedding upon the result.”

“Your

“ Your Lordship is a very strenuous friend to him indeed.”

“ Not more so than I am to Harriet. You may rely upon it, such an attachment, so unfeigned as hers, will never bend to another marriage—I do not believe an offer from the Prince of Wales could tempt her.”

“ I should hope, my Lord, some influence, some little authority may be allowed to rest in my breast ?”

“ Authority ? my dear friend ! If I know your heart (and that I do know it, is one of the delights of my life), I will be sworn you are now using a tone which you would not exert if you could. How often have you preferred death to the misery

excited in such cases—how strongly have I heard you reprobate the folly of such measures, which are the great springs of that unhappiness which men in retired life always charge upon us! No, no! I know you too well—the time of your concern and anxiety is not yet arrived.”

“ No?—Pray when am I to expect it?”

“ As soon as you have withdrawn your family to town, shut the door against Henry, and made a final resolution to stab your daughter’s peace for ever.—Then, when you see her heart swollen, her eyes gushing in silent tears, her beauty fading—and all the young men see by your hospitality

pitality that you are courting them to affect your daughter with a temper soured by disappointment——”

At this moment they drove past Armstrong's inn, whom they saw sitting at the window, and apparently wrangling with great petulance at some other person in company.

Mr. Howard continued silent for some time; and as they drove into the park, Lord Norbury asked him in a cheerful tone the subject of his thoughts.

“ I can,” answered he, “ do no harm by keeping Henry to dinner, and talking with him.” And turning towards the carriage, where the poor anxious heart of Henry was suppress-

ing a sigh to attempt a cheerful farewell, he requested his company with a tone and countenance of less aridity than he had ever yet expressed towards him.

The invitation was as little expected by the rest of the party, as by himself—it cheered the spirits of them all; and lighted up the “manly funniness” of Henry’s countenance with new fervor. Mrs. Howard—whose high opinion of her husband rendered her passive to every sentiment or wish that he expressed, suppressing her own under the conviction of his superior judgment—felt an instant suffusion of pleasure, which she could not restrain, while
she

she discovered his hand upon her daughter's, which she pressed with the emotion of undisssembled gladness.

Never was a table surrounded with more cheerfulness. Harriet cast many a look of busy enquiry in her father's face—Lord Norbury rendered himself peculiarly agreeable—Mrs. Howard, always elegant, always dignified, never conducted the honours with more charming ease and gracefulness than at this moment. The difference was so evident, that the servants were led to believe that the wedding had actually taken place, though they could discover no signs of it.—Mr. Howard partook of the general delight without conceiving that it

arose from the expectation he had raised.

The ladies had not long retired before Mr. Howard introduced a few topics of public news, in order to observe how they affected Henry's mind:—and he was very well pleased to find that he had not left the cultivation of that garden entirely for the other. Henry's leisure had been occupied chiefly by history and politics, with some good translations of classical authors; and he had generally acquainted himself with the measures of the times through the medium of newspapers; and he was in the constant practice of reading the debates in both houses of the Senate, and of
hearing

hearing his father's, and making his own comments upon them. Thus, though he would be deemed by the corps diplomatique but a secondary politician, yet he knew enough of the world as it passed, to form an opinion, to understand the conversations he heard, and to bear a part in the praise or dispraise of men and measures.

The servant announced to Lord Norbury, that a gentleman waited on him upon business, who declined sending in his name, having a letter to deliver into his own hand—and added, that he believed he was Mr. Writhe, the surgeon.

(180)

"I'll be sworn he comes from
Armstrong!" said My Lord. "Pray
let him know I will wait on him
directly."

CHAP.

C H A P. XXVIII.

WHEN they were together, Mr. Writhe, after a long list of apologies, and twenty silly smiles, covered with a moist damp upon his forehead, and a flush upon his face, and having twisted his long meagre person into numberless attitudes, produced a letter, which he begged with all humility to present to his Lordship, hoping no offence might be taken to him, who had indeed done and said all that he could to prevent the affray.

“ I hope,

“I hope, fir, your patient is recovering?”

“Oh yes! my Lord. Thank ye, my Lord—he’s doing vastly well, my Lord. But to be sure, it has been, my Lord, a very bad case, and required all my skill and address, my Lord. I assure your Lordship, if it had happened in any other part of the county, I don’t know, my Lord, though I say it myself, and your Lordship knows we professional men cannot help speaking something about ourselves now and then—I don’t know but it might have been fatal.”

Conceive a tall man of about the height and breadth of an oak-sapling
with

with a cluster of leaves left at the top, which his wig very much resembled in shape and size—clad in a dark-brown full dress coat, that had been preserved in Monmouth-street ever since the wars of Queen Ann, with a waistcoat of tarnished gold tissue, whose pockets reached half down to his knee, with black velvet breeches, high-topped boots, and ruffles which covered his knuckles—conceive such a figure! sent to present a challenge to a high-spirited fashionable nobleman, and waiting with the utmost humility for his Lordship's gracious condescension to accept the honour of having his brains blown out!

As

As soon as his Lordship had read the challenge, he asked Mr. Writhe if he was to be Mr. Armstrong's second; to which he bowed in the affirmative. Desiring to have the pleasure of introducing him to Mr. Howard, he then led the way to the dining-room, where he found his two friends in conversation, of which, from their countenances, he was glad to form the most favourable conjectures.

"Give me leave, gentlemen," said his Lordship, smiling as he entered, "to introduce to you Mr. Writhe, who brings me tidings of Mr. Armstrong, whose recovery is now certain, owing to his extraordinary skill."

"Oh,

“ Oh, your Lordship is very kind!
—But indeed, when I studied at Leyden——”

“ Have you been at Leyden, sir ?”
said Mr. Howard.

“ I meant Edinburgh, sir !—My
Lord—gentlemen, your very obedient humble servant.”

“ Pray, sir,” said My Lord, “ are
they very strict in their examinations
at Edinburgh ?”

“ At Edinburgh, my Lord ? Oh,
dear ! I meant the college—Yes, my
Lord, very strict indeed. When I
passed my examination, I was a very
young man.”

“ You must have seen great practice
since that time, sir.”

This

This was an unfortunate remark ; for it being by no means clear, whether he ever studied at all, or was ever examined at all, he preferred getting rid of so embarrassing a question, by taking refuge under the shelter of this remark ; and during the space of ten minutes' uninterrupted volubility, which for exquisiteness of tone, delicacy of sound, and tranquillity of motion, may well be compared to one of the patent alarms, or to a watch dashed on the ground from some lady's side in the middle of a ball-room, he entertained his astonished hearers with the wounds, bruises and putrifying sores of all the men and the maids, the ploughboys, carmen,

carmen, threshers, and old Philpots, within twenty miles' circumference of this spider of medicine. Scarcely could a child cry, but he proposed some specific—not a chin had a scrape to the quick on a Saturday-night, but the barber had a wink to send for doctor Writhe. In short, the desert upon the table had in a very few minutes imbibed in imagination some of the refuse of the doctor's operations ; and, as it could not be possible that his skill should keep pace with his tongue, and as the cause of his visit was rather more interesting, Lord Norbury ventured to turn the torrent of the doctor's eloquence to a different channel.

“ You

“ You say, sir, that Armstrong is recovered ? ”

“ Sir,” replied Æsculapius, “ when he sent for me, I was making a bolus for a bad eye.”

“ A bolus for a bad eye ! ” said Mr. Howard, with some surprise.

“ Pardon me, honoured sir—there are various sorts of boluses—first, that which is requisite in cases of——.” The doctor here found he had a five-barred gate in his way ; and that before he could leap it, it would be necessary to shorten his stirrups.—“ But, gentlemen, these scientific enquiries must be very uninteresting to you.”

“ Rather so, indeed,” said Henry : —“ But, pray, sir——”

“ Sir,

“ Sir, I found the patient very anxious and out of spirits : but I told him when I first saw him, that he would do very well. He thought fit to send for a great gentleman from London at a great expence, because great men are always valued by the amount of their charges—and so when he came, he told him the same as I did, and made a slight alteration in the plaister, took his fee—a cool fifty, sir, a cool fifty—blundered into his post-chaise, and was off again !”

“ It must needs be a valuable alteration this ?” said Henry.

“ Oh, nothing !” replied Mr. Writhe ; “ only he took off my caustic,

tic, and put on diachylon and cerate, and some settings—things that we professional men understand, but we do not frighten our patients about.”

This excited a general laugh, which raised this skilful body of physic from his chair; and smoothing his face to a grave respect, he begged pardon for having presumed to talk so freely.

“ Tell Mr. Armstrong, that I am ready to meet him,” said Lord Norbury: “ but that I have received a letter from town, acquainting me of the extreme situation of Sir Francis Bloom, and I had designed to set off this very afternoon, that I might see him if possible before his death.”

“ He

“ He is dead, sir !” said Mr. Writhe: “ he is dead, sir !——When I was leaving Mr. Armstrong just now, an express arrived, and he opened the letter before I came away.”

“ Can this be true ?” said Henry.

“ True, sir !——true, sir !——I don’t understand your truth, sir !——Mr. Somerville !”

“ No : upon my word, I don’t think you do, sir,” said Henry.

The doctor rose again from his chair.

“ Pray, sir, sit down,” said Lord Norbury : “ whom did the letter come from ?”

“ From—from—my Lord—Oh I
recollect

recollect—it was signed by a 'Squire John Blunt."

"Then it is too true," added his Lordship. "Poor Frank!—he has outlived his honour and his name!"

"Pray, sir," said Henry, "was this the first news of his death? Did not Mr. Armstrong know of his being ill?"

"Yes, very well; for Sir Francis sent him but a day or two ago a silver-hilted sword and a brace of pistols, as the last present, the poor gentleman wrote word, he should ever make him—but that, as he had made him a promise, he complied, though much against his mind. I

suppose by that he felt himself going.

—Oh, sir, 'tis a fine thing for a man to remember his friends in his last moments !”

Henry rose from his seat, unable to restrain his indignation, and paced two or three times hastily across the room.

“ Then, my Lord,” said Mr. Writhe, “ I am to be the messenger of your determination to meet Mr. Armstrong? What a cruel thing it is that great gentlemen will not settle a more easy way of adjusting their quarrels !”

Mr. Writhe, having practised his usual number of unnatural twists, at length found his way to the door,

to the no small satisfaction of all present.

The meeting was fixed for the following day. It was agreed that Armstrong should be desired to choose his weapon, the better to detect his villainy—and that Henry should be his Lordship's second—but that nothing should be said to either of the families.

"How in the name of common sense," said his Lordship, "came Armstrong to take up with such a second as this Writhe?"

"Evidently," replied Henry, "because he could procure no other.—"

His friends are all engaged—or on a journey—or, may be, sleeping.—Armstrong

strong may now make a great bluster
 —but I will be shot if we do not find
 him a coward. He is a mere bully,
 roaring in safety ; and when opposed,
 he will truckle, and shew his weak
 unmanly vices.—I remember in
 Potter's *Æschylus* some lines in the
 play of *Agamemnon*, which pre-
 cisely describe the heart of this
 wretch :—

Few have the fortitude of soul to honour
 A friend's success, without a touch of envy ;
 For that malignant passion to the heart
 Cleaves close, and with a double burden loads
 The man infected with it : first he feels
 In all their weight his own calamities,
 Then fights to see the happiness of others.

CHAP. XXIX.

MR. Howard having withdrawn for a few minutes to his study, Lord Norbury enquired of Henry how he relished his visit, as it was some time since he had been there last.

Henry expressed his great satisfaction at Mr. Howard's treatment of him; and said he never had accustomed himself to talk to him so much upon politics and the affairs of the country—that he (Henry) had learnt several matters from him relative to loans and the funded property, which he never yet understood.

“ I am

“ I am inclined to think favourably of all this,” added he ; “ but I do not quite see the reason for it, unless it was to prevent my speaking to him, while alone, on a more interesting subject—though, if he knew me better, he would not find such precautions necessary; for, as he has given me his determination already, I am resolved not to disturb the tranquillity of his mind, till I see more favourable grounds.”

“ I have,” said Lord Norbury, “availed myself of this morning’s ride, to urge every thing on the subject which I could suggest : and though he has been much averse to any union less than that of nobility,

without any objection to you ; yet I think I have put the case in two or three points of view, which obviate some of his difficulties, and tend to shorten the prospect ;—and I doubt not that your merit and talents will be a material cause of promoting your wishes.”

Thus Henry's joys approached towards their meridian : thus his obligations exceeded any efforts of acknowledgments—and thus Lord Norbury began to shew his love for Fanny, by becoming the avowed friend of her brother.

“ I think,” said his Lordship, “ we cannot doubt of the death of poor Frank, and therefore I shall not set off

off to town; and as you will be with me to-morrow, keep a watchful eye upon Armstrong, so as to interfere only at the just moment. Use no violence yourself, but preserve a steady air—say little—but examine the weapons.”

“ You will excuse what I have been doing,” said Mr. Howard, as he entered the room—“ I have sent a few lines to Mr. Keen our surgeon, to desire him to attend, lest any unfair play should be used. I think it a great condescension, and rather wrong, that you should accept a challenge from a man so unfit to put himself on your Lordship’s ground; but that is your own af-

fair, not mine.—We will however, if you please, be of your party at some convenient distance.”

Having thus adjusted every thing, they joined the ladies, who were on that evening without company.—Henry fully reflected upon his promise to his mother, and his father’s well-founded reasoning against duelling—he could not presume to urge them to Lord Norbury, but he could, and did resolve to restrain his own indignation.

His Lordship was charmed to see that manly spirit so justly displayed, and rendered the more interesting, from his uniting in it the feelings of a brother and a friend!

“ My

“My worthy Henry,” said he, as they separated from the ladies in the garden, “I have but little anxiety about the event of this rencontre; for perhaps it will end in a seasonable chastisement of that scoundrel: but, as none of us can tell with certainty what such a meeting may produce, and he has long been practised in all the ways of the town, I have one charge to lay upon you. Take this pocket-book; it contains a paper, which, if I should drop, your sister and yourself will first of all open together.—Let not this excite your curiosity—I have there expressed only a few sentiments of a very sin-

cere affection, which, if I should survive, it will be my first pride to prove."

Henry's heart was full.

"Does your Lordship then really think us worthy of such confidence?"

"Most truly, Henry—I should be ungrateful, to be indifferent to either of you. Trust me, our future days, my very excellent friend, shall give you the amplest testimonies of my esteem!"

While the coffee was serving, Mr. Howard called upon Harriet for her harp. She played and sung, in a most captivating manner, an air lately set to music, and a little altered from a favourite poet:—

Ah! tell me, Phedria! tell me why,
 When summoning your pride, you try
 To meet her looks with cool neglect,
 Or cross her walk with slight respect
 (For so is falsehood best repaid);
 Whence do your cheeks reluctant glow?
 Why is your struggling tongue so slow?
 What means that fullness of brow?
 As if with all her broken vow
 You strove the fair apostate to upbraid!

Henry listened with mute attention,
 drinking deep draughts of consolation
 to the soul, in thus hearing a
 lesson from Harriet, that some others
 in the room might profit by as well
 as himself.

Fanny, whose texture was sensation
 the most refined, and, like the beauty
 of her form, all its component come-

lines of parts melted as it were into
 each other, in whom sentiment like
 her complexion clear and bright was
 diversified by a copious and precious
 mixture of charms, felt with unmin-
 gled truth the application of this
 little air to her own story—wondering,
 as well as the poet, at all the points
 he urged, yet taking an interest in
 the object not to be concealed.—
 Henry took it as a piece of raillery,
 and put it down to a good account,
 nothing doubting that he was now
 freely admitted by the sanction of
 her father, and that this day would
 be the auspicious æra of his future
 happiness. He strove to divest his
 mind of the fears which had op-
 pressed

pressed him, to assume an air of more avowed attention, to mark his conduct with an address peculiarly appropriate to her—in short, to show that he really was the lover.

Lord Norbury smothered his inclination to rally her upon the points of her song, though he ascribed it to the pleasantry which always accompanied her, and now engaged so agreeably in the service of her friend.

Mr. Howard was perhaps the only one who felt it too much—he did not think the time yet come, nor would he allow himself yet to think it ever would come, for his daughter to flatter either Henry or herself with the prospect of a certainty.

C H A P. XXX.

HENRY, having taken a reluctant leave of so delightful a circle, and having got into the high road on his return home, passed a man who he thought looked at him very hardly, to discover his person if possible in the dark—and in a few minutes heard him slacken his pace, stop—and at length turn his horse, and put on a brisk trot to overtake him.

Henry, whose courage never forsook him,

——(He, whom toil has brac'd, or manly play,
Has light as air each limb, each thought as clear
as day)

and unarmed with any other weapon than his native strength and vigour, preserved his pace, till a voice called him by his name, and begged him to stop, in a tone not much given to excite alarm. As soon as they had met, he discovered mounted on a horse which the famed Rosinante of La Mancha would have surpassed in flesh and spirit, the skilful Mr. Writhe.

He entreated pardon for thus interrupting his journey ; but he had been sent to find him by his patient, who, for some cause which he could not develop, had insisted on seeing Henry for a short time this evening ; and, as it was now between nine and ten o'clock, and the meeting was to be

be held the next day, he had no time to spare. "For, poor gentleman!" added this sagacious second, "he is in so bad a state of anxiety, that he sits for many minutes thinking and looking over a few papers he has with him, till the sweat drops like blood from his forehead, and his eyes roll like a patient in a delirium.—I once," said he, "had a patient—"

"A plague o' your patient!" interrupted Henry, "what have I to do with all this?—to what end am I desired to see him? [suspecting some base design]—Has he any body with him?"

"No, sir—only the landlord and your most obedient."

As they rode on together, Henry
learned

learned from his companion, that Armstrong's evil genius haunted him with the plagues of conscience, and the certain fears of death—that he had made a short will, had written to two friends, who had excused themselves from attending him—had cursed his own folly for sending for a surgeon from London, who had not effected his cure—and that he had left him reading a letter he had just received by express, which had so disturbed him, that he almost despaired of seeing his patient alive at his return.

As soon as they arrived at the inn, the landlord met him at the door, and told him that his guest
was

was very bad.—When he was ushered into the room, he found this man disarmed of every principle that could rescue him from destruction.—plunged into inextricable toils, surrounded with the horrors of a terrified imagination—shrinking at death, but resolved upon the grave.

Folly had in his jocund hours rattled her bells in his ears, and flattered him with the vain deceit that he should never be cast down.—Ignorance and error, the joint nurses of immorality and ingratitude, had encouraged his giddy career, and made him disbelieve a God. Atheism, with her companion Annihilation in her train, had buoyed him up, in the hurry.

hurry of luxurious pleasure and the riot of unprincipled licentiousness, to a false conviction, that a future account was a fable of superstitious mythology, and the consequent reward or punishment the bugbear and cant of fanaticism, calculated only to alarm the unwary, and draw aside the unsuspecting credulity of childhood, or the gaping astonishment of the grovelling multitude.—

With such sentiments of serious things, Armstrong had never been accustomed to restrain his indulgence, or to cast one look forward beyond the grave.

The time was now come, when Despondency had cast her sable mantle
round

round him—when Despair had seized upon his indiscretions; and terrified Expectation had led him to the precipice, into which he was ready to plunge, without a ray of hope to lessen his fall, without a gleam of virtue to measure back his steps, without one star from all the expanse of heaven to lead him upward for consolation !

Lost to himself, lost to the world, lost to Heaven, Despair marked him for her own; and eternal Shame, gaping wide her terrific jaws, impatient for her prey, waited for the swift moment of his dissolution ! Oh ! ye, whom false philosophy, and the conceits of idle fame ; whom
the

the labouring brain of something little less than phrensy fires—who yield to the ungrateful voice of Sin, and, rushing from the solace of Religion and her sacred beams, plunge into the darkness of Infidelity! arrest your fantastic flight—search out, and shew us if you find it, some more certain light which will lead your feeble undulating steps when nature trembles on the breath, and your unsteady eye swims in the medium of departing life! Shew us then your substitute for hope; but if you find it not, stop your rash folly while it is in time, and reflect on the exit of the wicked Armstrong!

Such was the state in which this
hero

hero of Atheism was preparing to finish his earthly course; deep sunk in ruin irretrievable!

“Sir,” said he to Henry, “excuse a wretch, who is now reduced to beg from your hands the little, very little, peace which his last moments can afford him—I have too many affairs in this world to adjust, and therefore I rush to another, where I hope for rest—and yet I have wronged those who may demand—but I must shorten explanations; for the time does not allow—”

“My time is yours,” said Henry.

“Ah! sir, you have time before hand, mine is past, I dare not look forward—and what is past is too painful

painful to review.—I shall very soon excuse the trouble I have rashly given to Lord Norbury and yourself—Take this paper, it contains the little reparation that lies in my power—Your indignation is just—I see that you disdain to receive from my hands any acknowledgment but death—in this you will soon be satisfied. I have however saved you this pride of heart; for I have returned to Mr. Gregson all your grandfather's securities cancelled, and thus, in spite of fate and honour, you must be his only heir—Thus I die content.”

“ Do I live,” said Henry, “ and hear rightly?—You die! By what means?—How, do you thus dread

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to die, and yet call upon death?—
Never shall you die, while I can prevent——’Tis true, I shall meet you to-morrow, but I would not have suffered either of you to fight.”

“ Had I known that—but, no—I have other accounts—All is well!—It must be so!”

“ By Heaven, this shall never be! —Would you die thus like a coward running from his post; you that called another to the field?—If you have done wrong, will death assist your repentance? If you have offended Heaven, will self-murder smooth the brow of eternal justice? or, if you have caused affliction, or done the deeds of blackest perfidy on earth,

earth, will this secure a better fame?
 —Have you never received the blessings of life?—Will this prove your gratitude? You spoke just now of daring not to look forward—Mistaken wretch, will thy own sword point thee a fairer road?”

“Oh! spare me—spare me,” cried he, in a hollow shivering tone—“’tis too late to argue—my brain is already half on fire!—Oh, that pang—gracious Providence!—Oh!—”

Henry, in the deepest consternation, rung the bell with much violence—The landlord and his wife, who had listened at the door, instantly entered—and before they could send for Mr. Writhe, Armstrong breathed a deep

figh, rolled his half-closing eyes, stretched himself in violent agonies, and at length expired.

Henry started with astonishment and dread—not that death could alarm a soul virtuous as his, but that it should first make its appearance to his sight accompanied with so much terror.

As soon as Mr. Writhe came in, he soon pronounced that the death was occasioned by a copious draught of some liquid in which arsenic was mixed. But as none had been bought at his house, he was clearly exculpated from censure; and, after some further enquiry, a paper was found in the closet with the remains of some
arsenic,

arsenic, from which it was supposed he had filled up the measure of his despair.

Henry ordered every care to be taken of the body, and proceeded to seal up the articles of property that belonged to the deceased. The host, who, aided by his jolly wife, had no small grain of curiosity, having first expressed to Henry his hope, that he would take care of his bill, and of the great attention they had paid to Mr. Armstrong, proceeded to acquaint him of a few of the strange occurrences that had happened since he had taken up his abode at their inn—and when the bill was produced, it appeared that brandy and

L 3,

large:

large supplies of cordials, commonly called *comfort*, had very essentially contributed to send their miserable guest rather speedily to his journey's end:—that he had once been in a violent rage at a man, who had brought a brace of pistols not of the right sort—that he was made very happy one evening by a present from Sir Francis Bloom of a sword and pistols—and that they had heard him consult Wriche on probing a wound made by that sword; and that this was the only time he was calm and quiet since he had been there, though they had done all in their power; —but that he soon sunk back into his usual angry manner—full of
pain,

pain, dissatisfaction, and violence—often roaring out vengeance against Lord Norbury, and then regretting it, and saying he had done him wrong—in short, that he often shewed the turbulence of a madman.

When Mr. Writhe heard the landlord mention the sword, he made a sign to him to stop, and strove to lead their attention to some of the funeral arrangements. But Henry had, ever since the letter to Lord Norbury, resolved to make that the object of particular investigation; and, therefore, taking it up from the table, turned to Mr. Writhe, and with a firm tone demanded if he ever saw it before.

“Saw it, sir? Yes, I—I—this

L 4 sword,

sword, fir? Yes, I—I—perhaps I may, fir.”

“ Then I take it that you have, fir!—Now, pray when did you see it ?” drawing it from the scabbard.

“ Oh! Lord! fir,” exclaimed Writhe, lifting up both his hands, “ I had no concern in it, fir, I do assure you—I saw it but the day before yesterday, fir.”

“ And then you saw this flat point of it, and then you was consulted how it would break in the body, and could not be extracted without excruciating torment, or something next to death—or not at all ?”——

“ Indeed, fir—your honour—Mr. Henry !”——

“ Pray

" Pray now tell me, did not Mr. Armstrong design to choose this weapon ?"—

" Indeed, sir ! I can't tell."

" Do not add falsehood to thy shame, thou mean soul of villainy ! Tell me plainly, or I will make thee the public scorn of all the country round."—

" I believe he did, sir."

" And you, knowing this, designed to be his second ? Armstrong has saved thee from the hand of justice ! Fly from the sight of day—never shew thyself again—but go to some deep recess in yonder forest, and waste out the remnant of thy days in bitter repentance !"

Henry shewed him to the door—and that very hour this doughty knight of the lancet took French leave of his shop and his neighbourhood for ever.

It was now too late in the night to return to the Park—Henry therefore put the paper into his pocket, which Armstrong had given him, without reading it ; and left a note with strict directions that it should be carried to Lord Norbury, by five o'clock the next morning—promising to be with him by breakfast-time.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXXI.

HENRY's family had long since retired to rest, when he arrived at home; he therefore spent the chief part of the night in reading over the paper in question, and ruminating on the happy termination of the embarrassment into which they might have fallen if Armstrong had stood firm at his post. The paper was nothing more than a corroboration of what he had done in sending back the cancelled securities to Mr. Gregson—but expressing in the close of it, that though he had, by sending

the challenge, kept up appearances to the last, he had not been able to persuade himself to add Lord Norbury's death to his other crimes—a man, whom he dared not meet.

It afterwards proved that Armstrong had advanced great part of the annuities to old Somerville, and had purchased the debts contracted for the others, so that he was possessed of the entire right to the manor and estates, which had been vested for the repayment of the money borrowed. These, in the agony of his remorse, he re-invested in Mr. Somerville's family—and having left no heirs, Henry had no one to contend with.

He

He rose early in the morning, and leaving a short message for his father, that Armstrong was dead, and that he was going to breakfast at the Park, set off to fulfil his engagement.

It was one of those mornings in October, clear and fresh, which renders the rosy hue of health more ruddy, and all the face of nature jocund and gay ;—the birds chanted their morning orisons, and the opening glories of the day united to awaken his gratitude, and to form his mind to a sympathetic delight, of which the present posture of his affairs rendered him peculiarly susceptible.

He arrived within an hour after
the

the messenger he had ordered from the inn, and, desiring to be announced to Lord Norbury, was immediately admitted to his chamber.

As soon as he had related the particulars of Armstrong's death, and shewn him the paper in question, his Lordship congratulated him; but observed, that, as suicide is generally deemed a presumptive proof of insanity, the whole of his property might have fallen to the Crown, if he had not taken the precaution of previously surrendering his claim in the formal manner alluded to. "And now then," added he, "nothing seems to obstruct our progress.—I have last night lent a finishing hand
to

to your own affairs, by prevailing on Mr. Howard to suspend his determination—and now that you are possessed of so ample a fortune, I think he will be puzzled to find another objection.”

“ But, your Lordship recollects I have promised the whole to my family, and that *must* be fulfilled.”

“ So it shall, Henry, and I will hope to be allowed to shew you a plan to fulfil it.”

“ Here is your Lordship’s pocket-book, as you gave it me.”

“ Keep it, Henry—and instead of reading its contents with Fanny, tell Mary she must now supply her sister’s place—for, as to Fanny, Mr. Greg-
son

son shall make her a settlement on my estates, which will not render the pocket-book quite so necessary to her. Your worthy parents live at ease by their own prudence—and though I could not offend their delicacy so much as to obtrude acknowledgements upon them, they will know that they can at all times command the services of a son-in-law, as well as a son, and perhaps they will find as hearty a welcome at Norbury Park as at your manor.”

“My spirits swim in strange confusion,” said Henry—“so rapid a reverse of fortune, and your Lordship’s goodness, awaken my deepest sense of gratitude—Oh, My Lord !
where:

where are the proper words that should shew you what I feel? I am not accustomed to speak insincerely, and I find what I feel cannot be expressed !”

“ My worthy friend,” replied Lord Norbury, “ I shall delight to call you brother, and to form plans together for our mutual happiness—but why should you still seem anxious?”

“ Because, if Mr. Howard should still decline——”

“ Leave that to me, my excellent friend. Let us prepare for breakfast. Mr. Howard will soon make his appearance, for you know he said he would join our party : and if I judge
rightly,

rightly, Mr. Keen is now driving up the avenue: we must contrive to keep him here for a day or two, that he may assist in a different ceremony."

Mr. Howard and Mr. Keen entered Lord Norbury's dressing-room together, and both joined in very cordial congratulations at meeting in a situation so much more agreeable than what they had prepared for.

His Lordship left Henry in the chamber, in order to go and receive them.

"I have passed the greater part of the night in thinking upon this rencontre," said Mr. Howard, addressing himself to Lord Norbury,
as

as he took him by the hand, “ and, if it had ended without mischief, as so many of them do, of the crisis to which it would have brought both your own and my daughter’s situation :—and though I must freely say, it would have pleased me better that she had set her mind upon a man of more rank and fortune ; yet, as the young people’s minds seem so inseparable, and as Henry seems to possess a nobly generous disposition, and has a good counsel in your Lordship, I give you full authority to tell him that I no longer stand between them.”

“ Believe me,” said Lord Norbury, “ my dear Charles, you are by this securing the happiness of

us all. And now let me inform you, that Armstrong, stung to the quick at having fleeced old Somerville in the money transactions between them, has surrendered up all his securities, and voluntarily invested Henry with the manor and estates unincumbered : your daughter will thus have a jointure suitable to her, and her husband will bear a rank in society that will not disgrace you."

"Wonderful indeed!" said Mr. Howard—"This hour shall begin our general joy.—But your Lordship has not even yet made your speech—I suppose you have secured your election."

He left him in haste to communi-

cate.

cate these glad tidings to Mrs. Howard—but prevented her from spreading the tale further, that the lovers might relate their own story.

burst with redoubled horror upon me!—But then let it burst—I wait its fury, for in the storm I may at least die with Harriet's name upon my lips!"

Mr. Howard, followed by his lady, led his daughter by the hand into the room, and without speaking, for his heart was full, presented her to Henry. Astonished by the delirium of his joy, he started for a moment—and then flew with extended arms, and overflowing heart, and clasped her to his breast, "My life—my Harriet!" he exclaimed—and thrice pressed her to his beating heart.—It was a moment, in which the gushing soul, melting in delicious drops of animated

animated nature, dissolved in holy tears !

Mr. Howard embraced them both without being able to speak ; but, pressing their hands together, at length in a tremulous voice, casting his eyes first upon them, and then upward to heaven : “ My dearest children, be happy ! ”—And then turning to his wife, he poured the stream of his feeling heart into her affectionate bosom.

Henry, who now saw his dream realized, and that he was allowed to look on Harriet in a nearer view than before, still kept her hand in his, and still nourished the

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charm

charm of pressing it frequently to his lips. Her tender bosom beat in unison with his—her softened eye, sparkling like a sun-beam upon the early dew, gained momentary rays from the same source which animated his—and scarcely restraining himself from catching her again to his bosom, he clasped his hands, and gave a free vent to his joy by a flood of silent manly tears.

As they approached the window, they discovered Lord Norbury pleading his own cause with Fanny, whom he soon after led into the room. The charming suffusion on her countenance, mingled with the tender tumult

mult of her bosom, and the lively ray of unadulterate pleasure, which added new life to her person, needed but little explanation of those feelings which her downcast modesty strove in vain to conceal.

“ Allow me, my dear friends,” said his Lordship, as he entered the room, “ to say, that Miss Somerville has made me the happiest of men—and has permitted me to hope that her friend Harriet will cement their present friendship, by making one day the source of future happiness to both their families.”

“ Let us all join,” said Mr. Howard, “ in an early visit this morning
to

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to Mr. and Mrs. Somerville—we have all much to relate to them, and I know that their excellent hearts will join in our general joy.”

THE END.



Date	Time	Location	Weather	Wind	Temp	Humidity	Notes
10/10/2018	08:00	Lagos	Sunny	15 km/h	28°C	75%	Clear sky, light breeze
10/10/2018	12:00	Lagos	Sunny	20 km/h	30°C	70%	Clear sky, moderate breeze
10/10/2018	16:00	Lagos	Sunny	18 km/h	29°C	72%	Clear sky, light breeze
10/10/2018	20:00	Lagos	Sunny	12 km/h	27°C	78%	Clear sky, light breeze
10/10/2018	24:00	Lagos	Sunny	10 km/h	26°C	80%	Clear sky, light breeze
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